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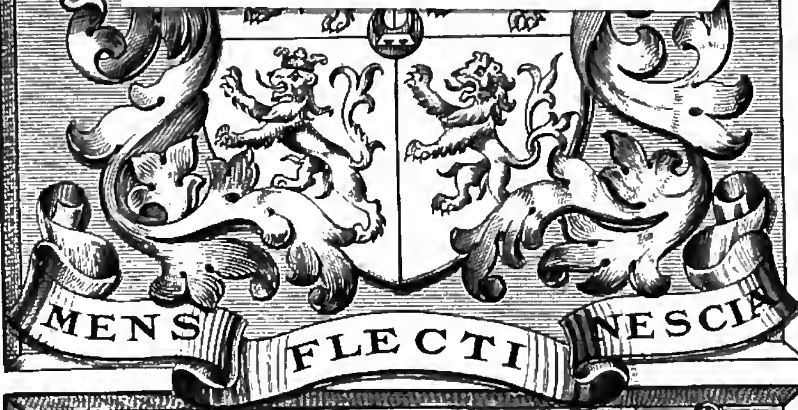

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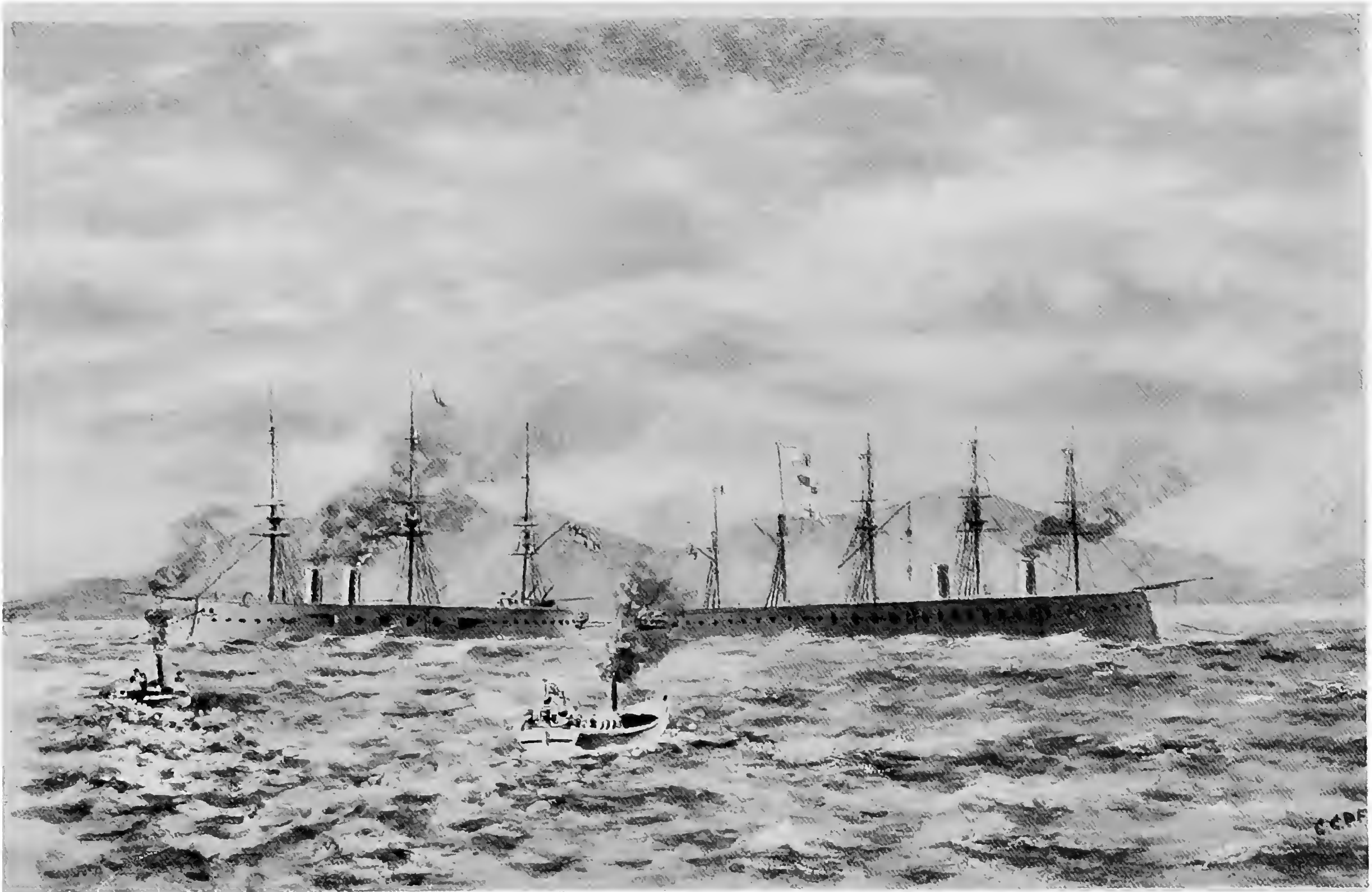
# MEMORIES OF THE SEA



THE *HERCULES* TOWING THE *AGINCOURT* OFF THE PEARL ROCK.

*From a sketch by the Author.*

[*See page 301.*

# MEMORIES OF THE SEA

BY

ADMIRAL PENROSE FITZGERALD

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1913

# PREFACE

WHEN I was asked to write "a volume of autobiographical recollections" I felt somewhat staggered at the mere look of such a request, and even after taking time to consider it, and to suggest a more modest title, I felt considerable doubt as to whether anything I could write concerning my reminiscences of naval service during the latter half of the nineteenth century could be of sufficient interest to justify its publication, particularly as several superannuated old sailors, with far more distinguished careers than I have had, have lately been giving their "autobiographical recollections" to the public. But yet, on further consideration, and feeling that I was an unhappy victim of that universal—yes, universal—vanity of loving to hear the sound of my own voice and of seeing myself in print, I have succumbed to this temptation—as to many others, perhaps less innocent.

C. C. P. FITZGERALD.

*January*, 1913.

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# MEMORIES OF THE SEA

## CHAPTER I

I join H.M.S. *Victory* at Portsmouth—Am transferred to the *Colossus*—Some reflections on corporal punishment and sea-sickness—A bully and how he was cowed—"Brig officers" and other quaint characters—The typical Jack Tar.

I DO not imagine that the childhood of any one, except very distinguished people, can be of much general interest. So I shall only begin with actual naval service; though, indeed, I ought perhaps to have said "early childhood" or "infancy," for I was only a child (just thirteen) when I joined H.M.S. *Victory* in 1854.

At that time all naval cadets were appointed to the *Victory* as "supernumeraries for disposal," and joined her at Portsmouth, until they were drafted to sea-going ships; and it is a proud day in the life of the boy when he first dons the uniform of England's navy and puts his foot on the quarter-deck of Nelson's flagship. At any rate, I know I felt very proud, and, being of an inquiring turn of mind, I asked a friend, who had been nearly two months in the navy and knew all about it, what I ought to do on joining the *Victory*, and he told me, without a moment's hesitation, that directly

I put my foot on the *Victory's* quarter-deck I was to call out in a loud voice, "I have come to avenge the death of Nelson." I thought this sounded very fine, but when the inspiring moment arrived I felt that I was scarcely big enough to avenge anybody's death, so I said nothing, and crawled up very meekly to the first person I saw in uniform, who, I think, was the bos'n, and reported myself as "come on board to join."

In 1854 we were in the midst of the Russian War, which found us, as usual, not ready for war, the country having been taught to believe that the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Palace of Peace in Hyde Park, had inaugurated an era of universal peace amongst the nations, and as there were never going to be any more wars, it was, of course, useless to spend money on armaments.

As it happened, however, the Palace of Peace ushered in to Europe and America half a century of as gigantic and sanguinary wars as the world has ever seen; and yet our amiable pacificists have already forgotten all this, and are once more making a bid for a still bigger series of wars, by crying out for disarmament by the richest and most envied empire which has ever excited the jealousy and cupidity of its commercial rivals.

The year 1854 also found our navy in a transition stage, both with regard to *personnel* and *matériel.*

With regard to the *personnel*, the continuous-service system had been lately introduced, by which the seamen entered the navy for ten years, with the option, at the end of that time, of serving on for another eleven years in order to complete

the twenty-one years which entitled them to a pension for life. Before this system was introduced the men joined their ships for the commission only, and when the ship was paid off they were free, and could go on shore for the rest of their lives if they liked, or they could join another ship on commissioning—if they could get one—as soon as their money was spent; and this most of them did, as very few of them were fit for any trade but sailoring.

By the old system, if the ship wanting a crew was going to an unpopular station, and if the captain was known to be unpopular and particularly addicted to flogging for small offences, she took two or three months, or even longer, to man; whereas, if the captain was popular and promised good times and plenty of prize-money, he could get his ship manned with the pick of the market in two or three days. Seamen had their fancies, like other people, and it is on record that on one occasion a nice, smart, well-painted brig, with a very popular and well-known commander, hoisted the pennant at nine o'clock one morning in Portsmouth harbour and was fully manned with a picked crew before noon. There were boatloads of men laying off, waiting for the pennant to be hoisted, and directly it went up there was a rush of three times as many seamen as the brig was allowed for her complement, so that the captain was able to pick and choose and get the very best; men who had served as petty officers giving up ratings they might have been entitled to in order to enter as A.B.'s. The brig's name was the *Daring*, so perhaps this had something to do with

it, as seamen have their fancies; and yet these brigs were rather given to capsizing. The *Camilla*, *Nerbudda*, *Heron*, *Sappho*, and, others, whose names I do not remember, all turned turtle during my time, and in most cases drowned all hands. Some were saved from the *Heron*, and I was afterwards shipmate with one of them, who used to give a graphic account of how he spent many hours in the water, hanging on to the spare topsail yard, which he tried to get on top of, for fear of sharks (it was off the West African coast), but the spar kept on turning round with him, so that it was just like the tread-mill, as he remarked.

The year 1854 also found us in a transition stage with regards to *matériel.* Vulcan had challenged Neptune for the sovereignty of the seas. The mechanic had said to the sailor, "This is my element, and you must give way to me. Furl your sails, unreeve your ropes, land all that timber lumber you call spars, and I will move your ship for you far quicker and more certainly than ever you have been able to do." And the mechanic was right.

There had been a number of small paddle-wheel steamers and a few small screws in the navy before 1854; but that year found us busily engaged in putting engines and screws into all our best sailing battleships and frigates, and also building all our new ships as steamers or altering those on the stocks; so we were in a transition stage; but our engineering firms—Penn, Maudesley, Bolton and Watt, and others—were equal to the occasion, and kept us

well ahead of all other nations with our steam navy.

My first sea-going ship was the *Colossus*, a fine 80-gun two-decker, which had just had engines and a screw put into her, and was fitting out in the steam basin at Portsmouth. She had only her lower masts in, and in those days ships' companies had to fit out and rig their own ships, with the assistance of a few dockyard riggers; but the initial difficulty was that we had not got a ship's company, and men were very hard to get—that is to say, men of the right sort. So captains had to ship any hungry, longshore loafers they could pick up and then try to make seamen of them as soon as the ship went to sea. We were a long time getting a crew for the *Colossus*. A great many ships were fitting out at the same time, in consequence of the Russian War, and there was some talk of resorting to the press-gang; but public feeling was opposed to this crude method, and it was not adopted. The summer of 1854 was well advanced, and we were too late for the Baltic campaign of that year, so it was decided that as soon as the ship was ready she should take a cruise to the West Indies, in order to get our motley crew into something like order; but as we still failed to get even a motley crew, a happy thought seems to have struck some one, and two hundred seamen from the *Ajax*, guard-ship at Queenstown, were drafted to the *Colossus* and joined her at Portsmouth. These men were bitterly discontented. The Admiralty had broken faith with them. They had been promised leave;

but instead of getting leave, they were ordered to join a ship for which they had not volunteered, and naturally considered this a hardship. They were physically a fine body of men, most of them being Irishmen; but they were sullen and sulky, and as soon as the ship went to sea and sailed for the West Indies they became actively mutinous. One night, when the commander was "going the rounds," as it was called, the grand rounds at 9 p.m., with the master-at-arms, mates of decks and other attendants, some of these men jumped out of their hammocks, picked up shot from the shot-racks, and rolled them at the legs of the grand rounds, who found themselves in the undignified position of having to drop their lanterns and hang on to the hammock hooks with their hands, to save their legs from being broken. There was a big flogging performance next day, and there was no more shot-rolling.

One of my earliest recollections of the *Colossus* was being sent one night, at about nine o'clock, with a message to the first lieutenant, who had gone home to his lodgings for the night. I had some difficulty in finding him, but at last I did so, in a small house in Queen Street, Portsea, and was shown by a slatternly looking maid into a small back room on the second floor, where I found this worthy old salt drinking hot gin and water with his wife, a lady who appeared, to my unsophisticated judgment, to be of about the same social class as the bumboat woman that attended on the *Colossus*, and from whom I used to buy jam tarts and oranges. Lieutenant

H.M.S. *Colossus.*

*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

F—— was an old man with a grey head. He was a typical specimen of many of the old fossils who had been long on shore on half pay and were dug out (there was no automatic age retirement at this time) to man our ships for the Russian War. His service in the *Colossus* was very short—about a month of the three months we took to fit out. He was, in fact, quite impossible as a modern officer, and the captain managed to get him superseded before the ship went to sea. His place was taken by another old gentleman with a grey head, who was considerably more active and not quite so old. Lieutenant R—— was known to his mess-mates as "Daisy," and to the ship's company as "Chaw-finger Jack." He acquired this remarkable sobriquet from a peculiar habit he had of biting the first finger of his right hand, in order to keep himself from swearing. He admitted to his friends that he had been strongly addicted to the use of bad language; but having come to the conclusion that he did not get any more work out of the men by swearing at them, he made up his mind to break himself of the habit, and found that the only way he could do so was by doubling up the first finger of his right hand, putting it into his mouth, and biting it hard across the knuckle. After some years of this treatment the finger had a deep and permanent score, showing the mark of his teeth upon it.

As I was the captain's A.D.C. in the *Colossus*, one of my duties—and a not infrequent one—was to go forward during evolutions with messages to the first lieutenant, either to say, "Please, sir,

the captain wants you," or else some technical message which I did not in the least understand myself, but which generally seemed to make the first lieutenant extremely angry; and as he had a menacing way of flourishing a long wooden spy-glass, which he usually carried on these occasions, I thought it best to keep out of range and shout my message from a little distance; but this really only made matters worse, as more people could then hear the message, which was not always of a complimentary nature. When the message was, "Please, sir, the captain wants you," old Daisy came aft to the break of the poop and stood there resignedly while he received an allowance of "cold tongue" from the captain; and then, as he turned round to go forward again, in went his finger into his mouth, and you could see by his contortions that he was biting it hard. It was said by some that the finger came out when he got about half-way along the gangway, and that before he got to the forecastle there was an explosion; but I did not hear this, and he certainly never swore at me, though he often looked savage.

I have already alluded to the fact that some of the contingent of seamen drafted from the *Ajax* to the *Colossus* broke out into something very like open mutiny during our passage out to the West Indies, and that there was a big flogging performance next day, which effectually put a stop to all further regrettable incidents of this nature. Possibly some of my readers may be amongst those who consider corporal punishment under any form to be a cruel, barbarous, and degrading method of maintaining discipline in the navy; and

although it has been found that due discipline can now be maintained without the use of the cat-o'-nine-tails, it is not fair to call it either barbarous or degrading when judged by the standard of what is called custom and public opinion of sixty years ago. Our forefathers had to work with a much rougher and less sensitive and refined human material than we have to do in the present day, and they were no more hard-hearted and cruel than we are. Barbarity can only be considered as a comparative term, according to the age to which it is applied. Nobody wants to see the cat pulled out of the bag again nowadays. It is, of course, out of the question with our generally well-behaved and self-respecting seamen and marines; but one who has served during both the flogging and imprisonment eras in the navy may be allowed to express the opinion that flogging was appropriate to the age in which it was used, and it was certainly not considered degrading by the men themselves. On the contrary, the man who took his four dozen like a man, without so much as a groan, was a hero afterwards, and was thought better of by all his shipmates, both officers and men. It was certainly a severe test of a manly endurance of pain without flinching. But woe betide the man who howled, for tradition says that in most ships, and more especially if he was a marine, he got another flogging next day from his own messmates, just to make him keep his mouth shut—as they called it—in case he should happen to earn another four dozen, as many wild and unruly characters did, three and four times over, during a ship's commission. The modern

punishments of ten days' cells or six weeks' imprisonment afford no test of a man's courage or endurance.

Oh, how ill all we youngsters were that first day at sea in the old *Colossus*, as she struggled to beat down channel against a double-reefed topsail breeze! And how she did pitch and roll and wallow in the trough of the sea, and creak and groan and complain!

Those who have only been to sea in iron or steel ships can have no idea of the strange voices of a wooden ship, as she strained and lurched under a press of sail against a head-sea. For however strongly and solidly built a wooden ship might be—and our old line-of-battle ships had massive beams and timbers—there must always have been some play at the joints, as the weight of the guns and the leverage of the lofty spars set up complex and various strains upon the structure; and so they gave us plenty of harsh music, to remind us that we were not in harbour.

The misery of that beat down channel, against a strong breeze and a head-sea, is deeply impressed on my memory, and we youngsters were not the only ones that were seasick, though we were probably the worst. We were mercifully not asked to do any duty, and we all lay about the decks like dead fish; thinking, no doubt, that the honour and glory of being a naval officer had some qualifications. My old messmate, Lord Ellenborough, who was one of the seven youngsters that received their salt-water baptism in the *Colossus*, was heard to offer five pounds for a lighthouse, or any place that would remain steady,

though why he specially selected a lighthouse is not known, except that he probably saw several lighthouses as we tacked off and on from the English coast, and observed that they were quite steady and neither rolling nor pitching; and I would gladly have added another five pounds—if I had had it—and joined him on his lighthouse, thinking it cheap at the price. But alas! there was to be no peace, and nothing steady, except a hard-hearted head-wind, until we got down to Falmouth Roads and anchored to set up rigging and take breath before starting finally on our voyage across the Atlantic.

It may be asked by some modern seaman why we did not steam down channel, seeing that the *Colossus* was a steamer. Well, the *Colossus* certainly carried engines and boilers, though it would scarcely be correct to call her a steamer, according to the present acceptation of the word; for the engines of these early steam line-of-battle ships were really only intended to be used in a calm. They were not wanted when the wind was fair, and they had not power enough to drive the ship when the wind was foul, and in fact everybody hated them and called them by all the names which the copious vocabulary of the sea supplies for the condemnation of hateful objects, and indeed the sailors had to invent some new ones more technically appropriate for describing this dirty invasion of Neptune's domain; but these names I need not repeat, as they were technical.

We seven youngsters, who commenced our naval career in the *Colossus* in 1854, were not altogether

fortunate with regard to our other messmates, who—to put the matter bluntly—were a bad lot; or at any rate the majority of them were. Few of them ever rose beyond the rank which they then held, and several of them "came to grief" in that rank. They bullied us youngsters most unmercifully, which perhaps was good for us, but was not pleasant. Amongst them there were two hoary old mates (now called sub-lieutenant) and a passed clerk (now called assistant paymaster) who had been long in their respective ranks and never rose beyond them, and who drank hard and swore fluently; but the most consistent and relentless of all the bullies was a bumptious midshipman, who had only quite lately himself emerged from the status of "youngster," and who, for the first six months of the commission, lorded it over us with an undisputed tyranny which we at first bore with meekness and even with respect, believing it to be a legitimate branch of that almost sacred naval discipline which a study of Marryat's novels had taught us to reverence with fear and trembling. But our friend overdid it. Like most tyrants, he got worse and worse, and presuming too much upon our ignorance and humility, he finally drove us into open revolt, and we flogged him. Yes, we flogged our senior officer, and gave him three dozen with a thief's cat!

Our tyrant was absolutely ignorant of the criminal conspiracy which had been brewing for a week or more, until one fine morning he came into the gunroom at breakfast-time, and was in the act of delivering a bombastic oration to the

"youngsters," setting forth their numerous delinquencies and gross ignorance of their duties, and telling them how *he* intended to teach them their duty and keep them under the strictest discipline and obedience to his will, and finally telling them that it would be good for them in the end. But the hour had come. The cup was full, and his autocratic rule was to be a thing of the past. The spokesman of the conspirators rose and told him very quietly that the youngsters had had enough of his bullying, and that before he had his breakfast they intended to give him something that would be good for him in the end, without specifying which end. The plot had been carefully laid. Everything was in readiness, and, like wild cats, the seven youngsters sprang upon him and lashed him up securely to the breech of the 32-pounder in the gunroom. His surprise and consternation were complete. He struggled violently; but seven to one was too much for him. Then he yelled wildly for his brother "oldsters" to come and rescue him; but they looked on and laughed heartily, greatly enjoying the performance. *Arcades ambo.*

The thief's cat had been very carefully made, under the direction of one of the bos'n's mates, out of an old and very hard set of hammock clews, and it had three knots on each of the nine tails, as we were told that this was the proper construction of a thief's cat, and we conceived that our victim was worthy of at least a thief's punishment. We did not divest him of any of his clothing, but we had reason to believe—from his language and his contortions—that the punishment was likely

to be effective, and indeed it proved to be so, for he was completely cowed, and never gave us any further trouble. Some years afterwards he acquired an unenviable notoriety through the exhibition of an abnormal zeal for hanging niggers at the time of the Jamaica disturbances; and after that he was not much heard of.

It is often said that truth is stranger than fiction, and there certainly were three actual characters in the gunroom mess of the *Colossus* who were at least as strange—if not stranger—than any of those nautical celebrities drawn with such humour and prolific imagination in Marryat's immortal tales of the British Navy.

I will not give their real names; for although they all "went aloft," after Tom Bowling, many years ago, some of their relations might possibly read these lines, and be annoyed. I will therefore call them by their nicknames.

"Paddy" was a mate, and a very old mate. I see by a navy list of that date that there were 315 mates on the active list, and Paddy was very nearly at the top of them. What his age was I do not know, but he certainly looked to be well over thirty. He was a big, powerfully built Irishman with sandy-red whiskers and enormous fists, and he was a notable "bruiser"; in fact, it was popularly believed in the gunroom mess of the *Colossus* that he had for some years been a professional prizefighter. At any rate he used often to go on shore in the evening after working hours and come on board next morning with a cut face and one, or two, black eyes; and it would have gone hard with any of his messmates who

had been so injudicious as to ask him how he got them ; for he was an irascible and disappointed man, who had obviously mistaken his profession when he joined the navy.

The second of this remarkable trio was nicknamed "Duffy," a sobriquet which was supposed to indicate his likeness to plum-pudding. He was enormously fat, and it was said that he weighed 18 stone; but I never saw him weighed, and cannot vouch for this. At any rate he was not allowed to go aloft, for fear of breaking the ratlines.

He was a midshipman; or rather he said he was, though tradition said that he was really only a naval cadet, as he had never passed the necessary examination for midshipman; but he wore the white patch on the collar of his jacket and was popularly supposed to be the senior midshipman. He could not have been less than two or three and twenty; but whatever his rank was at the time he joined the *Colossus*, he never got beyond that rank, and his naval career came speedily to an end. In short, he was "got rid of," by the quiet and unobtrusive method (not possible in the present day) of telling him that he was no longer wanted, and he took the hint and left.

The third of the trio was perhaps the greatest curiosity of all. He also must remain nameless. I even hesitate to give his nickname; but if the reader will remember that both language and manners were somewhat coarser and less refined half a century ago (at any rate in the navy) than they are to-day, I may be forgiven for recording the fact that my messmate was known

as "Lousy Dick," and, like most nicknames, it was not inappropriate. Dick had long greasy hair, almost amounting to ringlets. His face and hands were nearly always dirty. His linen—whenever you caught a glimpse of it—was a sort of french grey, many shades removed from white. I once looked into his chest—his sea-chest—as I was passing by, and it appeared to be nearly empty. Dick claimed relationship with a noble family; but whether his noble relations kept him short of money or he spent what he got on other things than clothes, or whether he pawned or sold his clothes, it is a fact that he possessed only one garment in which he was permitted to appear on the quarter-deck to keep his watch, and that was his tail-coat. We all had tail-coats in those days, both cadets and midshipmen—yes, and swords too, instead of trumpery little dirks; and the tail-coat was an imposing and dignified-looking garment, with notched and corded button-holes and a white kersey lining to the tails. Thank goodness! I had moved up a step before midshipmen were deprived of their tail-coats and swords. And now goodbye to Dick! Poor Dick! Perhaps it was not altogether his fault; but he certainly did look uncomfortable as he paced the lee-side of the quarter for his four hours' watch in his full dress-coat, the butt of cruel ridicule. He too disappeared at an early stage of the *Colossus's* commission, and has long since gone aloft, where he will no longer want the tail-coat, which probably found its place in the window of a pawnshop.

It must not be assumed that the *Colossus* was in any sense a typical ship of the British Navy of 1854. On the contrary, I have no doubt she was a very exceptional ship of that date, more particularly with regard to her gunroom officers; for I well remember that in the following year, when we joined the Baltic fleet and got amongst other ships, we became a byword for a rowdy and disreputable gunroom mess; and it all ended in the fiasco of the discovery of a big swindle by the caterer, who had been lent for a few weeks to our tender (the gunboat *Dapper*), and on his return on board the *Colossus* was immediately placed under close arrest, it having been discovered during his absence that he had pocketed the greater part of the mess subscriptions, paid no bills, and involved the mess in a debt of about £400 to various tradesmen. He, of course, left the *Colossus*, and the navy; but we who remained suffered for his sins for many months afterwards, as we had to continue paying our mess money in order to pay off the debt, and got nothing for it, but had to live on ship's provisions, which in those days were a good deal less luxurious—to put it mildly—than they are to-day; and moreover this lack of luxury was considerably accentuated by the fact that we were in an enemy's country and could get no supplies from the shore; so that although we spent most of our time at anchor in the Baltic we were little better off than were our hardy forefathers when they were blockading Brest during the old French War. There was, however, an exception to the usual fare of salt beef and salt pork on alternate

days, for occasionally there arrived a shipload of live bullocks for the fleet, and they were, of course, immediately killed and eaten; and very tough they were, I remember, even for young teeth.

We also had visits from Danish bumboats, laden with eggs and Dutch cheeses; but as these were small, slow-sailing coasting vessels of Dutch build, they took a long time on the voyage, and as the eggs were not all laid the day before the vessel left port, they could not be described as "fresh" eggs by the time they reached us. Indeed, I have a very vivid recollection of those eggs and of how we had to hold our noses while we ate them; but we were very hungry. The Dutch cheeses were about the size and shape of a 32-pounder shot, and nearly as hard; but still they were distinctly a luxury, as compared with the monotonous salt beef and pork, and even as compared with the eggs.

But I am anticipating; for this was in 1855, and I have not yet got the *Colossus* to the West Indies, where we spent our first Christmas Day, in Port Royal harbour, and our young eyes saw, for the first time, a ship's company "happy," which in those days meant drunk, in the language of the British tar. The new Jamaica rum seemed to have a maddening effect upon them, and the ship presented a queer scene of riot, drunkenness, and disorder. One marine was found dead next morning from an overdose of the poison. A sad death for a gallant soldier.

There were several of the before-mentioned brigs on the West Indian station in 1854; and

I remember the admiration with which we youngsters used to watch these beautiful little vessels sailing into Port Royal harbour, and the smartness with which they clewed up and furled their sails, dropped anchor and squared yards, all in a few minutes.

I wanted very much to go to one of these brigs; they looked so beautiful, and I was told that they were the best possible school for learning practical seamanship; and to become a thorough seaman was considered to be, if not the one thing needful, at least the principal item in the education of a naval officer sixty years ago. But my captain would not allow me to go to a brig, and he was wise; for these brigs, although they may have been a good school for seamanship, had not the best of reputations for discipline, sobriety, good order, or attention to the many minor though more or less important matters involved in the general organization of a man-of-war which are desirable in the education of a youngster just starting upon his naval career. In fact, I can well remember hearing—at a later period—the expression "brig officer" used as a term of contempt or reproach with reference to those who had served for several consecutive commissions in brigs; with perhaps the additional remark that Mr. —— would make a very good boatswain, but that having served most of his time in a brig, slave-hunting on the West Coast of Africa, he would never become a good all-round officer, fit to maintain the discipline of a frigate or line-of-battle ship in accordance with the best traditions of the navy.

Lord Dundonald, in his autobiography, draws a graphic and humorous picture of one of these "bo'sn" officers, who was first lieutenant of a ship he commissioned during the early part of last century. Lieutenant Larmor ("Jack Larmor," as he was called) was discovered with his coat off, a fid of grease in his hat, a marline-spike slung round his neck, and his shirt-sleeves tucked up, showing some of his newly entered sailors how to "turn in" one of the deadeyes of the lower rigging. This, no doubt, was a generation earlier than the date of which I am speaking, and it could scarcely have happened in 1854; yet this "type" of officer lingered on in the navy almost to the time when sails were finally abolished in all ships of war; and when we remember that all our great naval victories were won under sail, and mainly by the exhibition of a practical seamanship superior to that of our enemies, it is not surprising that the art of the sailor died hard.

The typical Jack Tar will live for ever in English history. I have seen him in the flesh; every hair of his head a rope-yarn, and his blood "Stock hollum" tar—the successors of those men who, under the guidance of hardy and skilful leaders, broke the tyranny of Napoleon and wrote, with other blood than "Stock hollum" tar, the names of Trafalgar, the Nile, St. Vincent, and scores of others on the roll of England's naval victories.

Jack Tar has gone for ever; but we may confidently hope that his spirit and devotion to duty still live in his sober, respectable, educated, and scientific successor, who, however, sadly wants some practice at fighting, whatever our snivelling

pacificists may say to the contrary, grossly ignorant as they are of history and consequently of the causes which lead to the rise and fall of nations, for it is the warlike races that inherit the earth, and the whole record of history points out most emphatically that all those nations which in their turn became the "Great Powers" of the world—in other words, those nations which became dominant, opulent, which possessed themselves of the fairest and most fertile portions of the earth, and finally took the lead in art, in commerce, and in the graces and refinements of civilization—rose to their power during their warlike period, and invariably declined and fell when they neglected and despised "militarism" and proceeded to devote the best brains and most virile energies of the nation to money-making, games, amusements, and that fatal and enervating craving for luxury which wealth invariably fosters.

Sea power, backed by a small but efficient army, has raised these little islands to the position of a great and rich, if not the greatest and richest, Power on earth. The critical hour of our destiny has now most undoubtedly arrived, and if commercialism, with its attendant selfishness and luxury, gets the upper hand of militarism, with its attendant self-sacrifice and patriotism, we shall inevitably fall, as all our great predecessors have fallen before us, from precisely the same cause; and all our wealth and our great possessions will pass into the hands of a more warlike race, in accordance with that inexorable law of nature we call the "survival of the fittest"; which in plain language means the strongest, the

strongest in war, and not the cleverest in a commercial bargain, nor the people who can cheer loudest at a gladiatorial show of professional footballers. Bacon tells us: "In the youth of a State arms do flourish. In the middle age of a State, learning: and then both together for a time. In the declining age of a State, the mechanical arts and merchandise."

Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, says: "War is the normal condition of this world; from man to the lowest insect all are at strife; and the glory of arms, which cannot be obtained without the exercise of honour, fortitude, courage, obedience, modesty, and temperance, excites the brave man's patriotism, and is a chastening corrective to the rich man's pride." But Sir William Napier, though a brilliant writer, was also a soldier, and it is therefore probable that his views on the subject will not be accepted without question by a nation of shopkeepers who seem to be coming more and more under the influence of the gospel according to Carnegie and his disciples, those amiable but somewhat audacious dreamers who think they can suddenly alter the whole course of the world's history by preaching peace, just at a time when all nations are arming to the teeth in preparation for the next war. I will therefore give one more quotation from a man of peace, a man who cannot be accused of a taste for militarism or of any desire to glorify war, one who, whatever else he may have been, was at any rate a deep student of history, and was too honest to misread or misrepresent its plain lessons, no matter how

repugnant and unacceptable these might be to his own peace-loving soul. Ruskin wrote: "All the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war. When I tell you that war is the foundation of all the arts, I mean also that it is the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men. It was very strange for me to discover this, and very dreadful, but I saw it to be quite an undeniable fact. The common notion that peace and the higher virtues of civil life flourished together, I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the *vices* of civil life only flourish together. We talk of peace and learning, peace and plenty, and of peace and civilization; but I found that those were not the words that the muse of history coupled together; that on her lips the words were peace and sensuality, peace and selfishness, peace and death. I found, in brief, that all great nations learnt their truth of word and strength of thought in war; that they were nourished in war and wasted by peace; taught by war and betrayed by peace; in a word, that they were born in war and expired in peace."

Ruskin's conclusions seem to me to be undeniable, and the fact that the great majority of men in all countries love peace does not prove that it is good for them nor good for their country. Indeed, it would almost appear that the fighting instinct which is a part of our nature must find a safety-valve somewhere, and that if we do not have a foreign war we shall probably soon have a civil war between capital and labour. Men who ought to know better have of late been talking a prodigious amount of nonsense about the

abolition of all war and the disarmament of the Great Powers of the world. Women, as a rule, are not such fools, and a section of them have lately been showing a considerable capacity for fighting and for the necessary courage and self-sacrifice which war involves.

If the cocks won't fight, the hens will peck them!

Nor can war be said to be unchristianlike, for it calls forth the noblest qualities in man—courage, devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice for the good of others. Our very hymns appeal to our warlike instincts—"Onward, Christian Soldiers," and many others of the same nature, which derive their most striking metaphors from war. War is undoubtedly a stern remedy for those selfish, insidious, cankerous vices which sap the manhood of a nation, and lead directly to its decline, and finally to its subjection by a more virile and war-like race. No one who reads history can doubt these facts.

But I must now go on with my yarn, and pass to another chapter.

## CHAPTER II

A cruise in the West Indies and home again—We sail for the Baltic in 1855—Sir Charles Napier—The Baltic campaign—Antiquated methods of naval signalling—Some philosophical reflections on Peace and War.

I PROPOSE to follow roughly, but not too rigidly, a chronological order in relating my memories of the sea, as I think this will be the best way of illustrating the great changes that have taken place in the navy during the last sixty years—changes not only in the type of the ships, but in the type of officers and seamen who man them. When one looks back upon the disgraceful scenes of drunken riot which took place in broad daylight outside the dockyard gates at Portsmouth, when a ship was paid off alongside the yard, it is difficult to realize that these took place only half a century ago and even later. On such occasions it was scarcely safe for an officer in uniform to walk along Common Hard, as he stood a very good chance of being dragged forcibly into one of the very numerous public-houses and invited to drink vile spirits by one of his old shipmates, who had probably had many a glass of grog from him, and now wanted to return the hospitality. This is not a pleasant subject to dwell upon, but I once

saw rather an amusing incident between a noble captain and a half-seas-over tar, just *inside* the dockyard gates at Portsmouth. It was not paying-off time, but the sailor was returning from leave and had managed to pull himself together sufficiently to pass the police guard at the dockyard gate. The noble captain, Lord ——, was about nine or ten yards in front of the sailor, who seemed to have stowed the front of his blue frock with a full cargo of oranges, and with these he was taking shots at the captain; not throwing them at his head, but trying most ingeniously to bowl them between his legs without hitting him. The noble captain had decidedly bandy legs, and the sailor made some extremely good shots for a man who was not strictly sober. At the first orange the captain looked round, but evidently took in at a glance how matters stood; and, no doubt having had some considerable experience of half-seas-over sailors, he took no further notice of the oranges, even when they gently grazed his legs, but walked majestically along with his head in the air. After five or six oranges had been bowled, some one came and interfered with the sailor and stopped the fun. It is to be hoped that the jovial tar did not belong to the noble captain's ship, for if he did he probably heard more of the subject in another place.

I have already said that the *Colossus* was by no means a typical ship of her date. She was, I am sure, quite exceptional; certainly with regard to her officers, if not with the crew. Of all the officers, from captain to naval cadet,

who commissioned in the ship in the summer of 1854, not one, with the exception of the captain and myself, ever attained flag rank; and this must be considered a very small proportion of the officers of a line-of-battle ship. Captain Robinson was a good officer and a strict disciplinarian; he was not nearly so archaic as some other captains under whom I have served at a later date. He had the honour of commanding the first steam frigate (*Arrogant*) that ever crossed the Atlantic, and also the first steam line-of-battle ship (*Colossus*), and he afterwards became Sir R. Spencer Robinson, and was Controller of the Navy for many years.

During the winter cruise of the *Colossus* to the West Indies there was nothing of special interest to relate. We called at Madeira, feasted on oranges and bananas, rode up to the convent on the mount on ponies, with their owners holding on to their tails, and came down the slippery, paved road in basket sleighs. Then the ship put to sea again, and we sailed lazily down "the trades," watching the flying-fish rising singly, or sometimes in shoals, with their many enemies —the dolphin, the albacore, and the bonito—chasing them and eating them when they caught them, which was not always. And I may here remark that the fish which sailors call the dolphin is really the coryphee, and the proper dolphin is the mammal usually called the porpoise. The coryphee is credited with being the fastest swimming fish in the sea, and certainly has a most business-like tail, and gets along at an astonishing rate. This is the fish that assumes such a

beautiful variety of colours as it lies upon the deck gasping its life away. I have seen it myself on many occasions. I do not know if Byron ever saw a dying dolphin; but poets are allowed to describe many things which they have never seen :—

> "Parting day
> Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
> With a new colour as it gasps away,
> The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone and all is grey."
>
> CHILDE HAROLD.

The *Colossus* came home from the West Indies in the early spring, and after a refit at Devonport, sailed for the Baltic with the great fleet that left the Downs on April 9, 1855.

This was the second great naval demonstration in the Baltic during the Russian War. Neither the expeditions of 1854 nor 1855 can be considered as more than demonstrations. The whole of the Baltic Sea was, of course, blockaded by the British fleet, and all maritime trade stopped; but this made very little difference to Russia, and probably had no effect on the termination of the war. The issue was really decided in the Black Sea, and both Baltic expeditions were, practically speaking, failures. The admirals were told by the Government that they were not to attack stone forts with their wooden ships, and were then censured by the same Government for doing nothing, when there was really nothing else to do. Sir Charles Napier, who commanded the British Baltic fleet in the summer of 1854, was shamefully treated by the politicians, and, being a hot-

tempered old gentleman, he wouldn't stand it. He got into Parliament as member for Southwark, and gave them back as good as they gave. A very interesting Life of Sir Charles was written by his stepson, General Elers Napier, and published in 1862. All the correspondence between the Admiralty and Sir Charles bearing upon the subject of what he was and was not to do with his ships in the Baltic is given in this book, and he is most emphatically told, over and over again, on no account to risk his ships against stone forts; and yet at the conclusion of the campaign in the autumn, when the ships had to leave the Baltic to avoid being frozen in, and the fleet returned to England, the Admiralty, backed by the Government of the day, severely censured Sir Charles Napier for *not* disobeying their own orders.

It may be asked why a British Government—assumably composed of honourable men—should act so ungenerously and inconsistently towards a gallant and distinguished public servant. The answer, I think, is not far to seek, and may be given in the words of Saul—"Because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."

It was the old story—the politicians shunting the blame on to the soldiers or the sailors when they fail to achieve such success as is expected of them, but quite ready to take the credit to themselves for their magnificent strategy and foresight when it turns out the other way. The fact of the matter was, that the country was disappointed at the small results obtained by the great fleet which was reviewed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria in

person, and sailed from Spithead in the early spring of 1854 amidst high hopes and great expectations of a glorious victory over the proud and audacious Czar, who dared to challenge the two great Western Powers, France and England combined.

It is unnecessary here to enter into the causes which led to the conflict known as the Crimean War, as I am not writing a history of the nineteenth century, but merely my personal recollections of some events which occurred during that period. Lord Beaconsfield declared at a later date that we backed the wrong horse on that occasion. This, however, must always remain a matter of opinion, as no one can say what might have happened if France and England had not opposed the ambitious pretensions of Russia when her armies crossed the Pruth and invaded the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, as that district was then called. But if one may be permitted for once to be wise after the event, it now seems clear that a much smaller section of the British fleet would have been sufficient to blockade the Baltic, as the Russians had not in that sea one single steam line-of-battle ship or frigate, and the bulk of the British fleet might have been sent to the Black Sea, where there was some real fighting to be done, and where they did eventually pit wooden ships against stone forts and got a good hammering for their trouble. And then, as a consequence of this experience, all the nations started off on their wild career of building armoured ships, which were to be impervious to all shot and shell and capable of knocking down any stone forts; and yet after

nearly sixty years of "applied science" to the subject, the balance between ships and forts remains pretty much the same as it was in 1854.

My narrative is only concerned with the Baltic fleet of 1855, in which I served; but I have thought it permissible to hark back to the expedition of the previous year, as it is interesting and instructive to note the relations which arise between politicians and admirals when the latter fail to achieve all that is expected of them by the people who stay at home and shout. And thus it turned out that when the Baltic fleet, under Sir Charles Napier, returned to England in the autumn of 1854, without having done anything beyond the capture of a third-class fortress in the Aland Islands (Bomersund), the British people were disappointed and angry, and the politicians—to save their own skins—shamelessly turned upon the admiral, censured him for not attacking stone forts with his wooden ships, and peremptorily ordered him to haul down his flag and come on shore.

As another instance of this kind of treatment, it is interesting to note what happened to Sir Edward Codrington after his gallant action at Navarino. This distinguished officer, who had commanded a line-of-battle ship at Trafalgar, was in command of an allied squadron in the Levant, in 1827; he had received orders from his Government that he was to watch the Turko-Egyptian fleet, under Ibraham Pasha, to prevent them from playing certain tricks which it was assumed they wanted to play; and he was ordered

to do this "even by the use of cannon shot." They did play these tricks, and Sir Edward Codrington fought the battle of Navarino and destroyed the Turko-Egyptian fleet; thus strictly obeying the orders he had received. But lo and behold, what happened then? The Government thought they had gone too far; they gave no credit to Sir Edward for his skilfully planned and gallant action, and described it as "an untoward event."

The Baltic fleet of 1855 was composed entirely of steamships. There were no sailing ships to hamper and delay the movements of the admiral in command, and he was also provided with a large number of gunboats of shallow draught, for operations in shoal water; and yet this great fleet did no more—in fact, rather less—than Sir Charles Napier's fleet of the previous year.

When Sir Charles was peremptorily ordered to haul down his flag, as a punishment for not disobeying orders, he was superseded in command by Admiral Dundas, who had been a Lord of the Admiralty in 1854, and had warmly approved of everything that had been done by his predecessor in the Baltic during the summer of that year, and yet failed entirely to support or defend him when he found him in trouble, but appears, by the correspondence published in General Elers Napier's "Life of Sir Charles," to have quietly stepped into his shoes without a qualm.

That Sir Charles Napier (or "Charley Napéer," as the men always called him) was a gallant and skilful seaman and a born leader of men is amply proved in the book above alluded to;

but when he came to wield the pen instead of the sword, it must be admitted that he was somewhat injudicious, and thus gave his wary enemies a chance of accusing him of disrespect towards those in authority. One specimen of his rash style of writing will perhaps suffice. While smarting under a keen sense of the gross injustice with which he had been treated by the Admiralty, and having previously requested Lord Palmerston (then Prime Minister) to grant an inquiry into his case, he thus addressed his Lordship :—

"I sent your Lordship my case, which I requested you to lay before the Cabinet, but you have not favoured me with a reply. I am aware of the various occupations of your Lordship, but still there ought to be some consideration for an old officer who has served his country faithfully, and who has held an important command. Had my papers been examined by your Cabinet, and justice done, instead of dismissing me, and appointing one of the Lords of the Admiralty my successor, you would have dismissed Sir James Graham and his Admiralty, for treachery to me." A method of stating his case which was not likely to obtain redress, as it reflected on the action and impartiality of the man he was addressing.

But I must now say goodbye to old "Charley Napêer." He gave me my nomination as naval cadet, so I trust I may be forgiven this slight digression, in a humble effort to vindicate the character and reputation of a gallant seaman who could handle the sword far better than the pen. As member for Southwark, Sir Charles was able

to tackle his enemy, Sir James Graham, in the House of Commons, though neither of the combatants added much to his reputation in the war of words and recriminations which ensued; and I have a vivid recollection of a picture in *Punch*, entitled "Charley Pot and Jemmy Kettle." The pot is surmounted with Sir Charles Napier's head, the kettle with that of Sir James Graham, and they are exchanging the usual courtesies of political opponents.

The Baltic fleet of 1855 sailed from the Downs quietly on the 9th of April. There was no great review and "send-off" by the Sovereign, like that of the previous year. Perhaps less was expected of it, or public ardour had been damped by disappointment; at any rate, there was very little excitement and no demonstration about our departure. The fleet "sailed" from the Downs in the technical as well as in the usual sense of the word; for although all the ships composing it had steam power, they very seldom used it, as the steamers of that date carried very little coal, and the early types of engines—either screw or paddle—consumed a large amount for a very small development of horse-power; so that our coal was reserved for emergencies, such as getting caught by a fog in narrow waters or for the day of battle. It would have been useless for getting a ship off a lee shore in a gale of wind, as these early steamers had not power enough for that purpose; and there were also two other reasons why steam was so little used at this time, reasons which prevailed in the navy for many years after the date

I am writing about. One was that there was a very strong and universal feeling that it was unseamanlike to use steam, except perhaps in a flat calm, and that a captain who could not take his ship in or out of harbour, under sail, with a commanding breeze, was "no seaman"; than which it was scarcely possible to make against a captain of fifty years ago a more scathing and derogatory remark. It would have been scarcely worse for his professional reputation to say that "he drinks." And another reason was the remarkable parsimony on the part of the Admiralty in the use of coal. Captains were over and over again hauled over the coals (no pun) for failing to exercise economy in the use of coal. They were enjoined to burn their ashes, and never on any account to use steam when they could make a passage or perform an evolution under sail. This short-sighted economy was responsible for the loss of many a valuable ship; notably that of the fine 101-gun two-decker *Conqueror*, on the Rum Quay, in the West Indies, in the "sixties." Gradually, though very slowly, the Board of Admiralty discovered that a few tons of coal were of less value to the country than a line-of-battle ship, and the instructions were revised, even before masts and sails were finally abolished from all ships of war.

I do not know how I shall ever get on with my story if I keep on making these frequent digressions. And yet it is possible that allusions to these fluctuations in naval opinion may be of as much interest to the general reader as the record of the personal experiences of an undistinguished officer.

We took eight days to cross the North Sea, and then we got into fogs off the Skaw (the north cape of Denmark) and tried to get pilots. It was very cold, and having lately been basking in a West Indian sun, we felt the cold acutely. We steamed through the Great Belt and finally anchored in the spacious and beautiful harbour of Kiel, which had not yet been stolen from the Danes, and which the British fleet used as a base for supplies of all sorts during its campaign in the Baltic. We had a flying squadron of frigates and paddle-wheel steamers in advance of the main fleet, feeling its way northward as the ice melted, and then in May the heavy ships moved up and anchored off Nargen Island, in sight of the great fortress of Revel, and there we lay at our anchors and looked at it, and then on up the Gulf of Finland and anchored off Cronstadt and looked at that.

I do not propose to dwell at any length upon my memories of the Baltic campaign. They are rather vague and hazy after a lapse of nearly sixty years, but I do remember being very hungry. I have told in the last chapter how the fleet obtained some supplies of provisions beyond its sea stores, and also how we were specially pinched in the *Colossus's* gunroom mess, through our caterer having swindled us out of three or four hundred pounds and left us in the lurch and heavily in debt, so that we had to go on paying our monthly mess money to pay off the debt instead of buying food, and thus we were reduced to "ship's provisions," with the occasional variation of a few stale eggs and some Dutch cheeses.

It got to be very hot in the Baltic in the months of June, July, and August—hotter than England; and it was daylight all night. Indeed, the night was the best time for viewing the Cronstadt forts, as there was then much less haze. They looked very formidable with their double and triple tiers of guns, and they were never attacked. One cannot help thinking that Nelson would have attacked them. It would, no doubt, have been very hazardous, though not more so than his attack on Copenhagen in 1801, and rashness not uncommonly succeeds in war. Moreover, it was said, and popularly believed *afterwards*, that a great many of the apparent guns were not real ones, but quakers, *i.e.*, wooden muzzles stuck on to boards placed in the embrasures of the truculent-looking three-decker forts. It was also known *afterwards* that this very old-fashioned *ruse de guerre* was adopted by the Russians at Petropaulovski, and by this means a British squadron was successfully bluffed and prevented from attacking that place.

Those who are only acquainted with the method of signalling in the navy since the adoption of the semaphore and the Morse code with a flashing light—to say nothing of "wireless"—can have little idea of the difficulties of handling a fleet before these inventions were introduced. By day we had nothing but the flags and a rather cumbersome code of vocabulary signals, in addition to the code of general executive signals, not differing much from the present ones; but as the fleet was nearly always under sail, the flags were frequently obscured from some of the ships, so that it was

often necessary for the flagship and her repeating ships to yaw or to lower one or two of the upper sails, in order to get a signal through. But at night it was still worse, for we had nothing but horn lanterns with candles in them, which often blew out when there was any wind; these lanterns were hoisted just above the bulwarks on light yards, which admitted of their display in various forms, such as four in a row horizontal, three vertical, a triangle of three, a diamond, and so on; and this crude method, supplemented by guns fired at varying time intervals (if they didn't miss fire and if the candles didn't blow out), sometimes got a signal through correctly at night.

I have had the privilege of inspecting some old signal logs, and I really do not think there was much, if any, improvement in signalling in the navy between 1805 and 1855. The navy seems to have gone to sleep for fifty years after Trafalgar, the evil effect of being without a serious rival.

The Baltic campaign of 1855 was very dull for everybody. There was a bombardment of Sweaborg with gunboats and mortar boats, but no real fighting for the big ships, no leave for either officers or men, no larks ashore for the midshipmen, no carousing for the men. Just six months' imprisonment, gaping at the enemy's forts. We had one little bit of excitement in the *Colossus*, though no fight. It was in September, and the main body of the fleet had withdrawn from the immediate vicinity of Cronstadt, leaving the *Colossus* and the 50-gun frigate *Impérieuse* to keep watch. These two ships were anchored in a bay on the south shore of the Gulf of St.

Petersburg, about twelve miles from Cronstadt. It was Sunday afternoon, and we were enveloped in a fog, when suddenly the fog lifted and discovered a steam line-of-battle ship, a steam frigate, a paddle-wheel steamer, and six gunboats, about two miles from us, steaming to the westward. The *Colossus* and *Impérieuse* were lying at single anchor with banked fires, steam ready at ten minutes' notice. Then there was great stoking-up of the fires, and the moment there was steam enough to move the engines we slipped our cables and gave chase, with the *Impérieuse* in company. The strange squadron showed no colours, but as we knew from their appearance that they were not any of our own ships, it was clear that they must be Russians, and the general idea was that having ascertained there were no British ships in the Gulf of St. Petersburg except the *Colossus* and *Impérieuse*, this squadron had been sent out for the express purpose of fighting us, and our excitement and expectation can be better imagined than described, for no sooner were we fairly under weigh and steaming full speed in the direction of the strange squadron than down came the fog again thicker than ever, and we could not see more than two or three ships' lengths in any direction. We were, of course, cleared for action, every one at his station, lower deck guns double shotted, and as we steamed along through the fog we expected every minute to come upon our enemies at close quarters, which put a considerable strain upon everybody's nerves. Captain Robinson walked briskly up and down the break of the poop, peering through the fog, with his now useless spyglass

tucked under his arm, and he had a grim smile on his face, which seemed to say, "Now at last I am going to have a chance." But it was not to be, for again the fog lifted and we saw our enemies, still at least two miles off and steaming as hard as they could go for Cronstadt. We followed close up to the entrance of the channel and just out of range of the forts, and then we stopped. This channel was said to be mined, for although torpedoes of all sorts were then in their infancy and the "Whitehead" had not been invented, the Russians did use a crude sort of ground mine, and Admiral Seymour, whose flag was flying in the *Exmouth*, lost an eye whilst examining one of these "infernal machines"—as they were then called—that had been dragged up by one of our own ships. But to return to our chase. Directly we stopped, a boat was lowered from the *Impérieuse*, and Captain Watson came on board to consult with our captain. I was A.D.C. to Captain Robinson, and consequently close to his heels on such occasions and heard all the conversation. Eager as our two gallant captains were for a fight, they came to the conclusion that they would not be justified in following the Russian squadron into port and coming within range of the forts, even if the channel were not mined, seeing that the whole British fleet had declined to do so all the summer; but they thought that the Russians had suspected a trap and believed that there were more British ships close at hand ready to join in the fight as soon as they heard the guns; and the two captains came to the conclusion that as soon as the Russian

commander had had time to look round and see (for it was now quite clear) that there were no other ships in sight, he would come out again and try conclusions with us; so it was decided to wait off the port and fire guns of defiance to try and bring them out. This we did, but without effect, until darkness descended upon us and we returned to our old anchorage and recovered our anchors which we had slipped.

Now why did we all want to fight? What could we gain by it? What had the Russians done to us, that we were so anxious to kill a lot of them and knock their ships to pieces?

The captain might get honours, and the commander and first lieutenant might get promotion; but what could the midshipmen get, or the seamen and marines, except wounds or death, which some of them were sure to get? And yet we all wanted to fight!

I do not feel sure that I can answer the above questions satisfactorily. No doubt Mr. Norman Angell and Mr. Carnegie would tell us that it was the foolish and wicked instinct of our unregenerate natures which produced these bellicose feelings, and they would explain to us that if the various nations would only agree to disarm there would be no more war, and all international disputes having been settled by arbitration, the world would be a much happier and better place to live in. Would it?

In the last chapter I quoted Ruskin, who tells us that "all the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war," and also that war "is the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties

of men," and that "all great nations learnt their truth of word and strength of thought in war."

Are we therefore quite certain that the world really would be a happier and better place to live in if war could be finally abolished?

Surely not only the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war, but all romance, most of the best poetry, everything that stirs men's blood to noble actions, all that lifts us out of the ruts of humdrum peace employments or frivolous amusements, and fires our imaginations and ambitions with the divine spark of self-sacrifice for the good of our country and those whom we love.

Has any one really ever tried to imagine what sort of a drab-coloured world this would be to live in if the romance of war could be abolished? the Cid, the Bayard, and our own Nelson replaced by the Carnegie hero, who flops into a horsepond and hauls out a squalling urchin? I did it myself once off Ryde pier. The urchin was just out of reach of the crook of my umbrella, and I had to go into the cold salt water and get wet and spoil a good suit of clothes and lose my hat that drifted away on the tide, and I was not given a Carnegie medal or a new hat, and I had to go down into the dirty stokehold of the Ryde steamer to keep my teeth from chattering all the way back to Portsmouth, yet it was scarcely a subject to inspire a Homer to sing or a Salvator Rosa to paint.

## CHAPTER III

The *Colossus* runs ashore—I join the *Royal George*—Kinglake on Universal Peace — Some nautical chestnuts — Spithead Review of 1856—Voyage to the Crimea *via* Gibraltar and Malta—Visit battlefields and return home with troops.

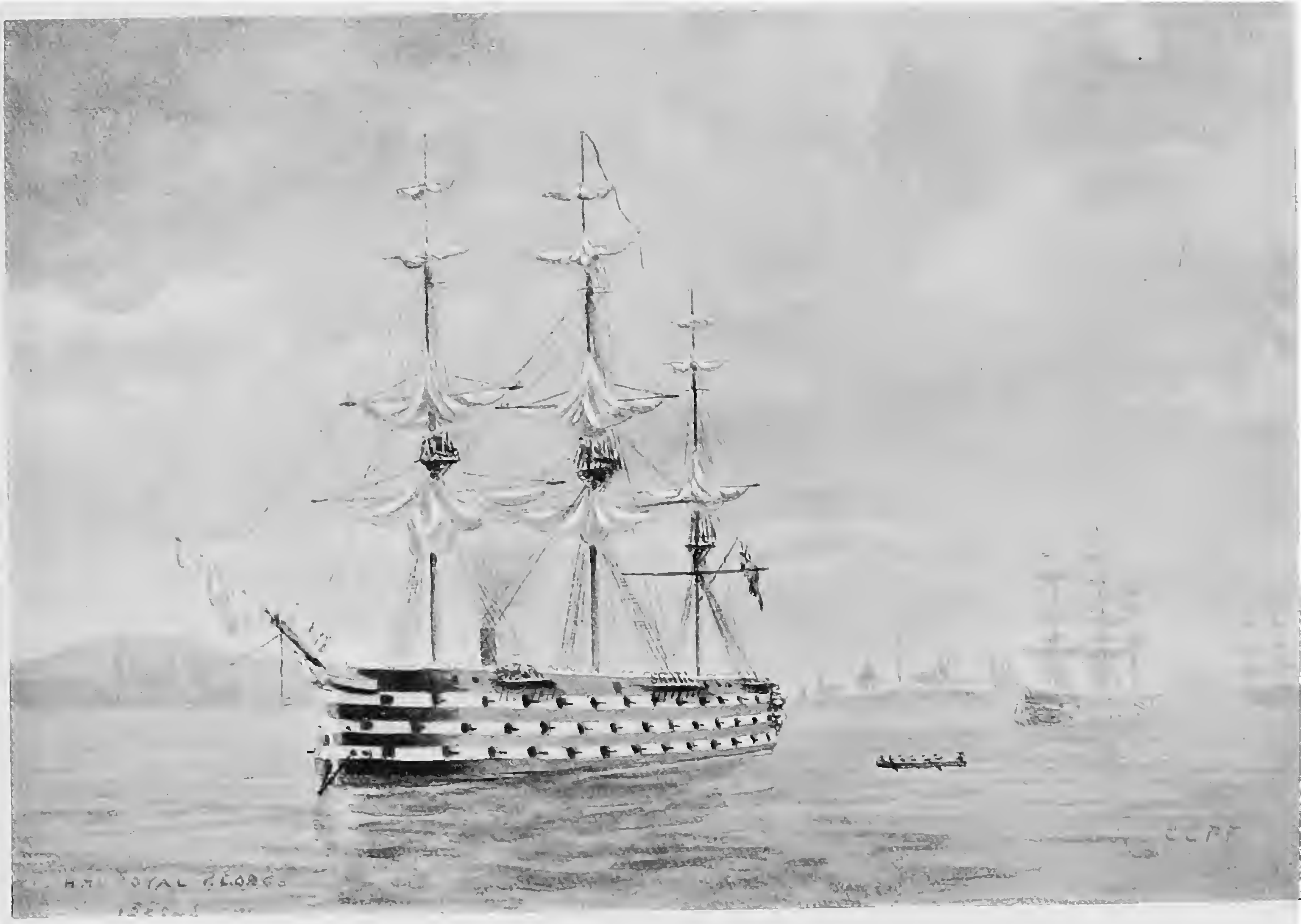
THE Baltic fleet came home to England in the autumn of 1855, without having accomplished anything that materially influenced the issues of peace or war, and as peace was signed in the following spring, there was no Baltic expedition in 1856.

During the passage home to England the *Colossus*—which had got separated from the fleet in a fog—ran on to the Gabbard Shoal in the North Sea and narrowly escaped shipwreck. It was about midnight on November 30th. I was asleep in my hammock, and was awakened by a crashing sound, as if all the crockery in the ship was being broken. I jumped up quickly, and began to put on my clothes; but was rather appalled at seeing an old quartermaster—who ought to have known better—flinging his arms about and moaning and groaning, declaring that the ship would go to pieces and we should all be drowned; so that I hesitated for a moment as to whether it would be wiser not to put my clothes on and thus have a better chance of swimming

without them. On second thoughts, however, I dressed and went on deck to my station as captain's A.D.C., and there I found the captain and the master "having some words." Nobody knew where we were; but the bumping had ceased, the ship was afloat in five-and-a-half fathoms, and the anchor was let go, sails were furled, and we fired guns for a pilot, but no pilot came.

At daylight we saw the buoy of the outer Gabbard Shoal close under the starboard quarter. We had bumped over the northern tail of the bank, and a few hundred yards farther to the southward would have finished my career, and a good many others' besides, as there was a heavy swell from a northern gale, which, however, had almost gone down and it was nearly calm when we struck.

In February, 1856, there was a re-shuffling of commands. Captain Codrington went from the *Royal George* to the *Algiers*, Captain Keppel took command of the *Colossus*, and Captain Robinson of the *Royal George*, and took me with him. The *Royal George* was a three-decker, launched in 1827, and, like a good many others of these antique craft, had been rejuvenated with a screw in her stern and boilers and engines where her water tanks used to be; and as room below also had to be found for some coal, it is not surprising that she was rather crowded. At a later date many of our wooden ships were lengthened fifty or sixty feet amidships, to make room for the boilers and engines; but even this was not very satisfactory, as the lengthening of



H.M.S. *Royal George.*
*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

a ship at the point of her extreme beam increased her tonnage considerably, and whereas the scantling of the ship—*i.e.*, the size of the frames, beams, and planking—were originally calculated for a ship of the smaller tonnage, they proved to be much too weak for a ship of the increased tonnage. There was, however, about a decade of wooden steamship-building in the navy, of ships designed and built as steamers—of course as a supplement to their sail power; and during this period our naval architects produced some beautiful specimens of line-of-battle ships and frigates, such as the *Renown*, 91; *Conqueror*, 101; *Glasgow*, 51; *Ariadne*, 26; and many others. But then came Vulcan with his iron and steel, and all these "things of beauty"—which they really were—had to be turned into firewood.

In March, 1856, the Peace of Paris was signed, and by that time the British Navy was just ready for war. It is, however, possible that when the next naval war breaks out we shall not be given two years to develop our resources; and if the "little navy" party get the upper hand in the councils of the State these resources will certainly remain undeveloped until it is too late for them to be of any use, and the consequences may be more serious for the nation than were those of our unreadiness in 1854. Yet in justice to Lord John Russell's Government it must not be forgotten that when war became imminent towards the close of 1853 scarcely two years had elapsed since the closing of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park—the Palace of Peace, where all the nations met together and swore by all their

gods that they were never going to fight any more —until next time.

Kinglake, in his "Invasion of the Crimea," gives a delightful description of the peace mania which had taken possession of the minds of some Englishmen at this period of our history:—

"All England had been brought to the opinion that it was a wickedness to incur war without necessity or justice; but when the leading spirits of the peace party had the happiness of beholding this result, they were far from stopping short. They went on to make light of the very principles by which peace is best maintained, and although they were conscientious men, meaning to say and do that which was right, yet, being unacquainted with the causes which bring about the fall of empires, they deliberately inculcated that habit of setting comfort against honour which historians call 'corruption.' They made it plain, as they imagined, that no war which was not engaged in for the actual defence of the country could ever be right; but even then they took no rest, for they went on and on, and still on, until their foremost thinker reached the conclusion that in the event of an attack upon our shores the invaders ought to be received with such an effusion of hospitality and brotherly love as could not fail to disarm them of their enmity, and convert the once dangerous invader into the valued friend of the family."

Kinglake goes on to say that the supporters of of this doctrine further argued that the invaders (naming the French) "would be so shamed by the kindness shown to their troops that they

would never rest until they had paid us a large pecuniary indemnity for any losses or inconveniences which the invasion might have caused."

To the best of my recollection the indemnity went the other way when the German armies invaded France.

Amongst other preparations which had been made for a continuance of the war was the building of a large number of shallow-draught steam gunboats, for service in the Baltic, and when peace was concluded it was difficult to know what to do with these little vessels, as they were not of much use for anything else. A good many of them were hauled up on ships, so as to be in readiness for "the next war." But unfortunately they had all been built very hurriedly of green timber, and were rotten long before the next war came. A few of them were sent to China, and did good service there in the China rivers as long as they lasted. They were originally rigged with three short pole masts and fore-and-aft sails; but those which were selected for service in China were specially rigged for the voyage with square sails, their gun was taken out, and other preparations were made for the voyage round the Cape, as this was before the days of the Suez Canal. They started under convoy of a big ship, but soon got separated, and had to make their way alone as best they could. I do not think any of them were lost; but of this I am not certain. At any rate they took a long time getting to Hongkong, putting into port for refreshment whenever there was a chance of doing so. Their radius of action under steam was very small, so that the voyage was made almost entirely

under sail. They did not carry a doctor, but the lieutenant in command was supplied with a medicine chest and a small book of medical and simple surgical instructions, telling him how to act in case any of his men were taken ill or met with an accident. The story was told afterwards that one of these young officers, after reading his book of instructions from cover to cover, got so puzzled with its contents that he gave it up as a bad job; so he called all hands aft on the quarter-deck, and having ordered the medical chest to be brought up from below, he thus addressed his crew: "Here are your medical stores for the voyage. I cannot make head or tail of the instructions for their use, so I am going to serve them all out to the messes in equal parts, to do what you like with them; and don't use them all at once, as they have got to last you until the ship arrives at Hongkong." The ship did arrive at Hongkong, with all hands in the best of health, but it is not stated what became of the medical stores.

And now I should like to make a remark which I hope will cover this and all other stories of the same sort which I may have to relate. I can well imagine one of my old shipmates—should any of them happen to read these lines—giving a grunt, and a shrug to his shoulders, with, "There goes old Fitz again with his stale chestnuts." My friend, please remember that naval stories which may be chestnuts for you, with your vast nautical experience, may be quite new to your less fortunate shore-going brother; and if you don't like my yarn you are not obliged to read any more of it.

One chestuut suggests another, and I need

not apologize for repeating the following story: When the great fleet sailed for the Baltic in 1854, to fight the Russians, it was naturally expected that there would be some wounded men; so it was decided to give the officers brief medical instruction in rendering first aid, until one of the doctors could attend to the case. Amongst these instructions was the use of the tourniquet, to arrest dangerous hæmorrhage. So one fine night, in the middle watch, the sentry at the admiral's cabin door on board the *Neptune* cut his own throat, which gave the officer of the watch (Lieutenant ——) an opportunity of putting in practice the first-aid instructions he had so lately received. He therefore whipped out his pocket-handkerchief, knotted it round the sentry's throat below the wound, and hove it up taut, with a bayonet scabbard for a lever. He then sent for the doctor, but before that officer arrived the gallant marine had breathed his last. In fact, he had not breathed at all since the tourniquet was applied.

On April 23, 1856, there was a grand review of the fleet by Queen Victoria. The ships assembled at Spithead, and they were all steamers with the exception of the two 90-gun ships *Rodney* and *London*. These were moored off the Nab lightship as pivot-ships, and the fleet got under way under steam, proceeding in two lines, wheeled round the pivot-ships and returned to their anchorage at Spithead. Her Majesty, in the royal yacht, took station between the two pivot-ships, and was heartily cheered by each ship as she passed. Admiral Sir George Seymour hoisted his flag on board the *Royal George*, and took

command of the fleet for the day. He was a veteran of the old French War, and had the mark of a deep sword-cut across his face. I often saw him afterwards riding in Rotten Row, where he was a well-known figure. I think he became Marquis of Hertford; but of this I am not sure, and in any case it has no bearing on my story.

After the review, many of the ships which had taken part in it were sent out to the Black Sea to bring home our army from the Crimea, and the *Royal George* was one of these; but as Portsmouth harbour was full, we were sent round to Sheerness to prepare for this service and get the ship ready for the embarkation of 1,000 troops, which was done by hoisting out the lower-deck guns, reducing the crew and providing mess-tables, hammocks, etc., for the accommodation of the soldiers.

We made a rapid passage as far as Gibraltar—five days from Plymouth!—which was really very good for an old three-decker, even with a fair wind; but after that a stop was put to our wild career, for we met a strong Levanter, and after bobbing up and down, under steam, for some time, burning coal and making no headway, the engines were stopped, and it was decided to try and work to windward under sail; but the delicate question then arose as to what sail she could carry; for the old ship—originally a crank ship—had been made still more crank by the removal of her lower-deck guns, whilst those on the main and middle decks had been retained, so that it really became a question of whether she would capsize or not if we made sail in the ordinary way.

Captain Robinson, however, was an experienced and practical seaman, and although he afterwards became Controller of the Navy, and no doubt found out all about centres of gravity, metacentres, curves of stability and other useful adjuncts of modern naval architecture, it is probable that on the occasion in question he merely acted on his instinct as a sailor. At any rate he began cautiously by first setting the trysails and other fore-and-aft sails, and then the courses; but this was enough, for without either topsails or topgallant sails the old ship lay over on her side quite far enough to be comfortable. I remember seeing the stewards struggling along the middle deck, bringing aft the wardroom dinner from the galley. The deck was at an angle about the same as the roof of an ordinary house, and having their hands full, they had wisely taken off their shoes and stockings, thus enabling them to hold on and avoid depositing the wardroom dinner in the lee scuppers, where many a dinner has found a resting-place ere now.

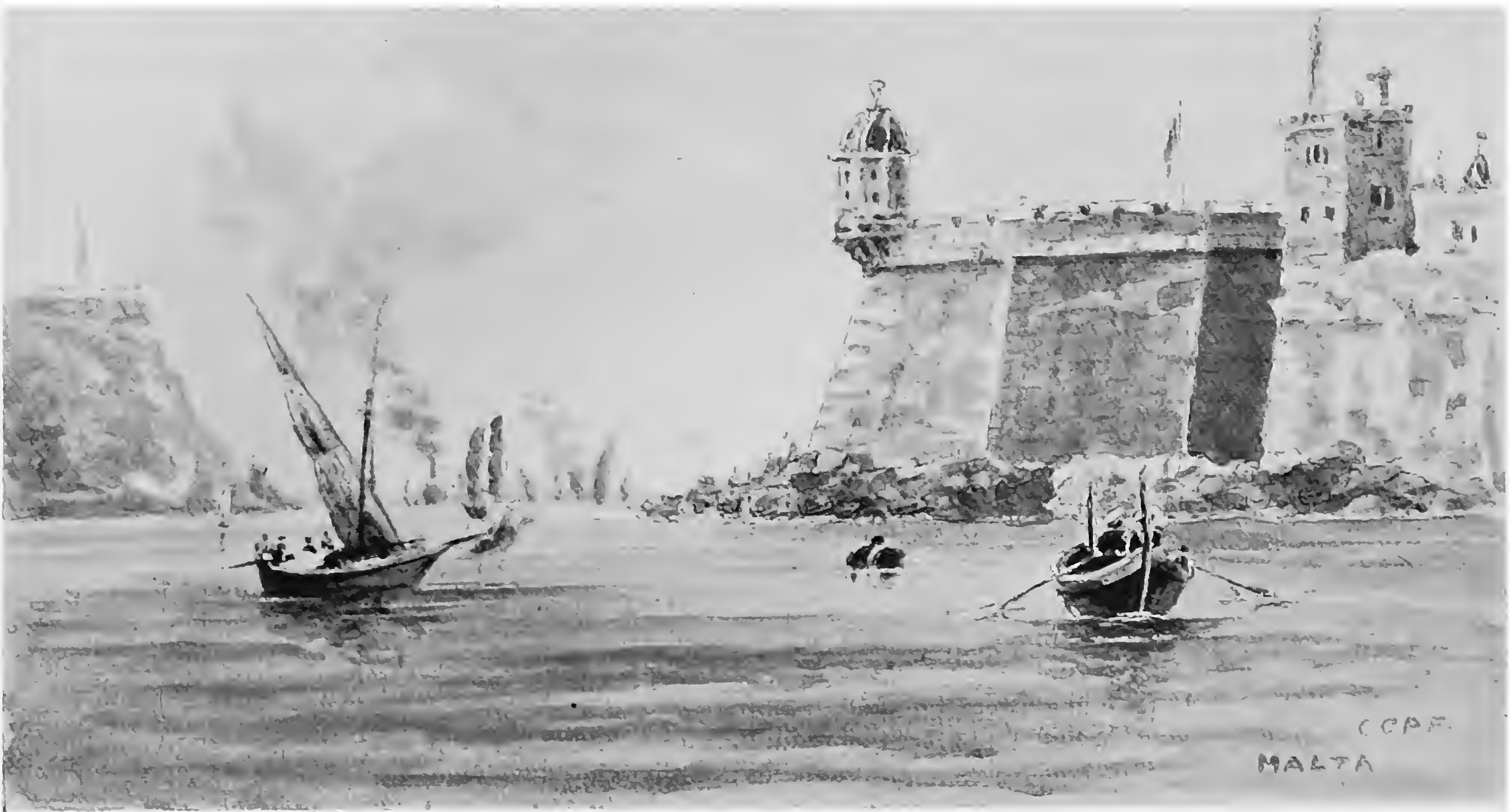
All things come to an end, even a hard-hearted Levanter, and we got to Malta at last. It was my first visit there, though not my last by many, and I remember that the water in the Grand Harbour was then so clear that we used to indulge in the sport of "heave for a dive." This meant that the Maltese boys, in their birthday suits, used to come under the stern in small boats and call out, "Heave for a dive, sar"; and then if you had a sixpenny or threepenny bit, you threw it overboard, and the urchins, after giving it a fair start, dived, and almost invariably brought it up, as you

could see it sinking for a long way down. They would not get many now, as the water in the Grand Harbour is almost as opaque as that of the Clyde below Glasgow.

We had not many sixpences or threepennies to spare in the gunroom, so we tried marine's buttons flattened out with a hammer, but the young rascals soon learnt to distinguish the difference, and declined to dive for anything but sterling coin.

After coaling at Malta we steamed in a calm through "the isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sang," and finally got to the Crimea and anchored in Kazatch Bay, where there was a great crowd of shipping of all sorts and sizes; and I also remember that there was a great crowd of flies, a perfect plague of them—bred, no doubt, in all the dead horses. I managed, however, to borrow a live horse from my old friend Sam Townsend, who then commanded the gunboat *Boxer*, and I had a most interesting ride over the battlefields, through the trenches, both French and English, and Russian too—Malikoff, Redan, and all the other places memorable in the annals of the great siege. One of our party was lucky enough to meet an old friend in the army, who came with us as guide, which added immensely to the interest of our ride. Some of the smells were remarkably pungent, and of great variety; but the soldier said he did not notice them.

Then came the embarkation of the troops; we took twelve hundred of them—the whole of the 82nd and half of the 50th; and glad indeed they




MALTA.

*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

were to get afloat, even though packed tight in an old three-decker; for they had had a very slow time on shore in their camps since the fighting was finished. It was the month of July, very hot and dusty on shore, and the said camps were none too clean. It was not their fault, poor fellows! Water had evidently been scarce for a long time, and when the soldiers came on board they brought with them some attendant satellites which were less welcome than they were themselves. It is not necessary to enter into particulars, but I know a good many of us had to get our heads shaved before we got home to England. But what a glorious time we had during the passage home! No school for the midshipmen; no drills or monotonous man-of-war routine for the ship's company. We were told to try and make our guests happy, and we did so by initiating them into the mysteries of sling the monkey, hi-cock-alorum, baste the bear, and other rough games of the sea; and right heartily they entered into the fun. In fact, we were all like a pack of schoolboys home for the holidays. But we met with foul winds and calms; we were a long time getting home, and had to put into Brest for coal, where we were received with great hospitality by our allies. Then on to Portsmouth, where we landed the troops, and the soldiers gave us a dinner at the Portland Hotel, which was then the leading hotel at Southsea. We had a great jollification that night, with songs after dinner instead of cigarettes. The colonel of the 82nd—Colonel Hale—a stalwart old warrior who looked his name, led off with "The Pope he leads

a happy life"; others followed. Port was then the usual after-dinner drink, and it was early morning before we took final leave of our jolly hosts.

After this the *Royal George* went round to Sheerness, and we paid off there on the 29th of August, 1856. But this was not the end of the old craft. We did not send our old horses to the knacker's yard quite so hastily in those days as we do now. The terms "obsolete" and "obsolescent" had not then been introduced into the navy. I am not defending the practice of keeping obsolete ships on the active list, but merely relating what occurred; and the *Royal George* was now razeed; that is to say, she had a deck cut off, and was thus turned into a two-decker. Her last commission was served as coastguard ship at Kingstown, and it was here that her brave captain, John McNiel Boyd, lost his life in a gallant attempt to rescue the crew of a merchant-ship which was wrecked during a heavy gale on the east pier, where a handsome monument was erected to his memory.

# CHAPTER IV

On board the *Retribution*—The ship's band—Gunnery training —Cobbing the cook—Start round the world—Teneriffe—Flying-fish, sea-songs and fisticuffs—Rio Janeiro—The Falkland Islands—The Straits of Magellan—Valparaiso—Guano and blubber.

MY next ship was the *Retribution*, a 28-gun, paddle-wheel steam frigate. We had a long commission of more than four years' duration; and if I had been given carte blanche in the way of choice and asked to select a cruise which would enable me to see as much of the world as possible, to visit as many strange lands and strange people, to experience as many changes of climate, or to have as good opportunities of learning the various duties of a seaman, I could not possibly have selected a cruise which would have better fulfilled these conditions than did the long commission of the *Retribution*. We first went "up the straits," as far as Malta, then home to England, then out to Rio Janeiro, then through the Straits of Magellan to the Pacific, then across to China and Japan, then on to India and Ceylon, and then home round the Cape of Good Hope. But I am not going to let the reader off with this brief sketch of the *Retribution's* commission. He has got to accompany me across many a stormy sea

and many a calm one too; through many changes of climate, to prepare to mop his moist brow in a crowded midshipmen's berth close to the after boiler-room in latitude 0° 0′ 0″, and to blow his fingers in the foretop in a gale of wind off Cape Horn, while Bob Crump, astride the weather yardarm, is shouting to his gallant foretop men to "light out to windward" for the fourth reef, and the midshipman of the foretop is adding his shrill pipe to the chorus.

Captain Charles Barker commissioned the *Retribution* at Sheerness in September, 1856. He had never been in a steamer before, and had been a long time on shore, I think twelve years, but of this I am not quite certain. Such long periods of unemployment were not uncommon when once a man had reached the captain's list and was without powerful interest. This, of course, was before the Childers age-retirement reform, and would be impossible now, as the average time for a captain to become a rear-admiral is ten years; but in 1856 it was twenty-five years. Thus we had no very young admirals at that date, as twenty-five years makes a big hole in a man's life.

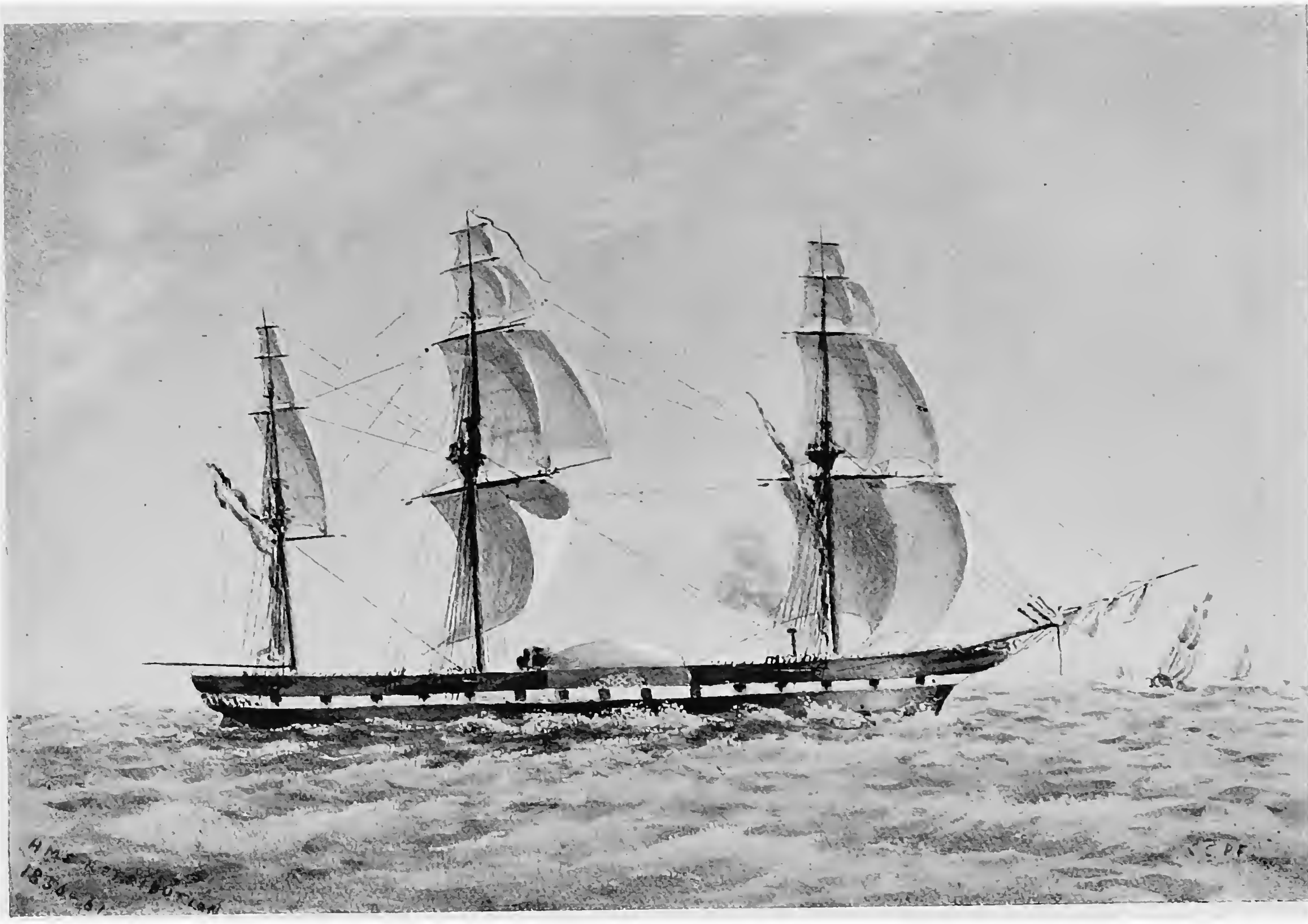
We all liked old Barker; he was naturally rather old-fashioned, but he was a fine seaman and a kindly old gentleman off duty.

But I must now say a word or two about the old ship that was to carry us round the world and weather many a storm, for she was rather a curiosity in her way. She was originally fitted with engines of 800 horse-power; but these

engines made her so deep in the water and so deeply immersed the paddle-wheels that she was considered a failure, so they took out half her boilers, gave her engines of 400 horse-power, and rigged her as a full-rigged frigate; and thus she became a really useful ship and a remarkably good sailer. She carried ten 8-inch guns on the upper deck and eighteen 32-pounders on the main deck; but these latter were rather near the water, and could only be worked in fine weather. She was 1,600 tons, the biggest paddle-wheel steamer ever built for the navy, with the exception of the *Terrible*, which was 1,800 tons, but did not carry so many guns.

In line-of-battle ships the lieutenants' mess was always called the wardroom, and the midshipmen's mess the gunroom; but in frigates the lieutenants' mess was the gunroom, and the midshipmen's was known as the "midshipmen's berth," and that was certainly a more appropriate name for it than gunroom, as it was a dark little place on the lower deck, in which the scuttles could only be kept open in harbour, or in very fine weather at sea. That of the *Retribution* was about 16 feet long by 8 feet wide, and it was only separated from the after boiler-room by a bulkhead, so that it was rather warm when we were under steam in the tropics. The table occupied almost the whole space; there was no room for chairs, and we sat round the table on lockers, in which were stowed some of our sea stores. There were two 6-inch scuttles, and as these passed through the thick side of a wooden ship they let in very little

light, so that we almost always had to burn candles, and as I have already said, the scuttles could only be taken out for ventilation in very fine weather. In this snug abode, on frugal fare, a dozen of us spent four years of our young lives: yet we were not a bit sorry for ourselves, though some of our friends who came to visit us were kind enough to pity us; and I have a very vivid recollection of a visit from my uncle—the late Sir James Ingham, who afterwards became the "Beak" of Bow Street—who came down to meet me on the return of the ship from her long cruise. He naturally wanted to see my mess-place, and I showed it to him; but it was a long time before I could convince him that I was not hoaxing him, for he was firmly convinced that the place I showed him was the dark cell where prisoners were confined. As, however, his eyes got accustomed to the darkness his scepticism departed, though not his horror at the terrible hardship I had suffered in having to spend four years of my life in such a "den," as he called it; and I must admit that our berth was not just then looking its best. There was a cask of Canary wine which we picked up at Teneriffe on our way home, and this was slung in rope slings over the table, and was "on tap" free, as we had a surplus in the wine fund which we wanted to work off; there was a shark's jaws which had not been very carefully scraped; the brush part of the tail of an elephant, that I shot in Ceylon; some ostrich's eggs from the Cape which had not been properly blown; and some rare and beautiful



H.M.S. *Retribution.*

*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

birds' skins which had not been scientifically cured: so it is quite possible that my uncle—without being over-fastidious—may have detected odours with which he was unfamiliar, and supposed this to be the normal atmosphere in which we lived. This same uncle of mine was quite the most charming man I ever met. One might have supposed that his experiences as a police magistrate, and his consequent familiarities with some of the most degraded aspects of human nature, would have hardened his heart and caused him to take a gloomy and cynical view of his fellow-creatures, but such was not the case; in fact, exactly the contrary seemed to be the result of his experiences. He was a confirmed optimist, and could talk wisely and cheerfully with men of his own age on current topics, or joke and chaff with boys and enter joyously into all their sports and amusements with equal ease and heartiness. Towards ladies he always showed that genuine unaffected courtesy and deference which the present generation calls "old-fashioned," and by so doing accentuates the fact that it is now somewhat rare. My father died when I was sixteen years of age, and my "Uncle James" was a father to me for many years of my life. I think he was the kindliest, most tender-hearted and absolutely unselfish man it has ever been my fortune to meet. He guided, advised, sympathized, and forgave much.

One of the first acts of the officers of the *Retribution*, when she commissioned, was to get up a band. We were not allowed any bands-

men in our complement—no provision for music, save the fiddle of the ship's musician and the drum of the marine drummer for beating to quarters; so the captain and officers put their hands in their pockets and bought a set of instruments, and then set to work to organize an amateur band. To the best of my recollection, the leading spirit in this work was our indefatigable paymaster, R. H. Bullen, who was foremost in all good works, including the organization of an amateur dramatic company, which he ran with great success during the whole commission. The first thing was to get a bandmaster, and, as luck would have it, the master-at-arms (head of the ship's police) was found to be a very fair performer on the cornet, and was forthwith selected as bandmaster. The blacksmith played a big brass instrument which he called the orphan-child, the proper name of which, I believe, is the ophicleide. The marine drummer beat the little drum with some vigour, and a stalwart stoker struck the big drum with even greater violence; but there were other instruments beside these—nine altogether, I think; and after a little practice we had a very respectable band, which did good service during the whole commission in cheering us up during dull times, and on certain State occasions of ceremony proved itself to be a great acquisition. One of these was when we landed the end of the first Indian submarine telegraph-cable at Kurrachee in 1859, and another when Lord Elgin landed at Yeddo (now Tokio) to conclude the first treaty with Japan. On this occasion the band was accommodated on a platform in the bows of the

starboard paddle-box boat, of which I was in proud command, and as we headed the procession and discoursed martial music with plenty of big drum, we awakened the echoes of mediæval Japan and considerably startled the worthy inhabitants of Yeddo. Our bandsmen were, of course, all volunteers, and played for love, and not for filthy lucre; though, in order to keep them in good humour, there was, undoubtedly, some arrangement between the first lieutenant and the master-at-arms by which they were excused from performing some of their more irksome and unpleasant duties. Anyhow, they never went on strike, and were always ready at a moment's notice to hurry up and play a tune. And now, while I am talking about bands and music, I must mention one extraordinary character who became an important member of the band. This was the ship's fiddler, Fentum by name. He was about as dirty and disreputable-looking an object as ever found its way on board a man-of-war; but he was a musical genius. I don't think he could read or write, not even music; but he could play any tune he had once heard, and he had heard a good many. He could play on his fiddle airs out of most of the principal operas, and play them with a delicacy of touch and a depth of feeling which seemed quite marvellous in a man of his appearance. Whenever we gave entertainments, Fentum was called upon to play solos on the violin, and he was always enthusiastically encored. He could make sweet music upon one string of his fiddle, and this was a performance which was usually called for and received with great applause. But

he was a most disreputable character, and although some of the officers did all in their power to reform him, their efforts were fruitless. He skulked from his work, got drunk on every possible opportunity, was always in trouble and generally on the black list, and was finally flogged as incorrigible. It was always a puzzle to us why a man with his musical talent should come to sea as fiddler on board a man-of-war, when he ought to have been able to earn good money on shore. Possibly he found the shore too hot for him; but if so, he certainly did not find a ship much cooler. And although some of my readers may lament and condemn the harsh treatment meted out to our naval Paganini, they should remember that he was given every possible opportunity of reforming and becoming a respectable member of the crew before strong measures were taken.

Another important question—only second to that of the band—which had to be settled before the ship left England was that of the gunnery training of the crew. The ship was not allowed a gunnery lieutenant, and in the ordinary course of events either the gunner (a warrant officer) would have to undertake the duties or else the training would have been only sectional and carried out intermittently by the lieutenants at their own quarters, and we midshipmen would have got no adequate instruction at all, and would have finally got third-class certificates or been plucked outright when we got home and had to face the ordeal of the gunnery examination on board the *Excellent*. What happened then was probably unique in the annals of the gunnery

department of the navy. The marine officer came forward and volunteered to undertake the whole of the gunnery training of the ship; not only of his own detachment of marines, but of all the seamen as well. He was fully qualified to do so, as he belonged to the artillery branch of the marines, the R.M.A., and he had lately been through the complete gunnery course on board the *Excellent*, the Mecca of all gunnery; but the position which he assumed was one of extreme delicacy, as he had to meet and overcome a deeply ingrained prejudice of the British tar against being "ordered about" (though he sometimes uses another verb) by a marine. Yet such was his tact, good humour, courtesy, steady perseverance and devotion to duty, that this young marine was able to conduct the gunnery duties of the *Retribution* for four years with less friction and more marked success than I have ever seen attained before or since. One happy result of the training was that all the midshipmen got first-class certificates when they went up for their final examination on board the *Excellent*. So we, at any rate, had reason to be thankful; but I think I am correct in saying that this indefatigable marine never got a penny of extra pay for all the extra work he undertook. He did it for the honour of the ship: and he certainly could not have foreseen that his name was to appear in the reminiscences of one of the midshipmen, who no doubt gave him a lot of trouble, but yet who became warmly attached to him, and formed a friendship which has lasted unbroken for fifty-five years. And as Byron says, "Bright names

will hallow song." I can find no brighter name to adorn my tale with than that of Robert Woollcombe, R.M.A., the best and truest friend I ever made in the navy, and who taught me many things besides gunnery.

The first duty the *Retribution* was sent upon after commissioning at Sheerness was to take a a batch of supernumeraries to Malta, and amongst them were twenty gunroom officers. We had no room for them in our mess-place, but we were not asked. We were simply told to take them and provide for them in the midshipmen's berth, which just held our own complement of eleven at a tight fit. So we had to arrange for three breakfasts, three dinners, and three suppers, and also lay in extra stores. Fortunately we had bad weather nearly all the way to Malta, and most of our passengers were seasick and never appeared at meals at all; so it was not so bad nor so uncomfortable (for us) as if the weather had been fine.

There is nothing of special interest to relate with regard to our trip to Malta and back to Plymouth, with the exception of a slight domestic disturbance which occurred in our mess. We had a great deal of trouble with our cook; he was a thoroughly bad cook. He spoilt our victuals, he quarrelled with the steward; he was generally late with all meals, and was, in fact, entirely unsatisfactory. We had tried reporting him for neglect of duty and getting him put on the black list, and also making stoppages from his pay; but as these were of no use, we decided to take matters into our own hands, and cob him. The

leading spirit in this attempt to improve cookery was our senior member and caterer, the Honourable G. F—— (mate), but he chivalrously remarked that as he was as big as the cook it would not be fair for him to take any active part in the actual cobbing; so it was arranged that we youngsters were to do the cobbing, and the Honourable G. F—— was to take the whole of the responsibility in case there was a row about it, which there was and which he did. Our arrangements having been made, the cook was sent for by the caterer, and duly appeared at the door of the berth; but something in the general aspect of the situation excited his suspicions, and before we youngsters could seize him he made a bolt across the steerage for the captain's steward's berth, and on his way managed to grab one of the seamen's rifles out of the rack, with which he gallantly defended himself amongst the captain's plates and dishes, some of which he (or we) broke. Numbers only can annihilate—as Nelson said—and after some of us had received some nasty knocks, we finally overpowered the cook, brought him back to our berth, hauled him over the table, and cobbed him with a leather bayonet scabbard. "But half of our heavy task was done" when that troublesome functionary, the master-at-arms, appeared on the scene and put a stop to the other half. Then when the ship returned to Plymouth the cook went ashore and engaged a lawyer, and we were threatened with an action for assault; but our dear old skipper, Charlie Barker, elected to treat it as a midshipmen's lark, forgave us for breaking his crockery,

and in conjunction with our caterer, who honourably fulfilled his promise to take the responsibility, a compromise was arranged privately: the cook got £5, and we heard no more about it.

Some years afterwards I heard that the midshipmen in a ship serving in the West Indies tried the same expedient for the improvement of cookery; but unfortunately for them they did not have a Charlie Barker for a captain; there was a court-martial, and two of them were turned out of the service.

I am afraid we were not a bit ashamed of ourselves for our assault on the cook. On the contrary, we were rather proud of it, and we cut "C.C.C.C." in the beam over the berth-table, which stood for "Cobbed Charles Cambridge Cook," with the date. This was the recognized method in those days of commemorating great events. I don't know what they do now with iron beams.

We had no difficult in engaging the services of a new cook at Plymouth. The Honourable G. F—— was promoted to the rank of lieutenant—presumably for his diplomatic action in the cook affair—and as we already had our full complement of lieutenants, he left the ship, and we never had another mate until I passed provisionally for that rank some years afterwards. Then on March 15, 1857, the *Retribution* sailed on her long cruise round the world, though when we left England we had no idea that there was anything in store for us save a three years' commission on the Pacific Station, and then home again the way we went. But when all is said and done, one of the principal

charms of a sea life is its many surprises and totally unexpected happenings. Our first call was at Teneriffe, and I remember we sighted the famous peak 130 miles off, glistening in the sun above the clouds, and a beautiful sight it was. I have seen it many times since, under varying conditions of weather. So various, indeed, are the different aspects it assumes that one never gets tired of looking at it. There is always something new and beautiful to compel one's admiration. "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale, her infinite variety."

At Teneriffe we midshipmen all went "'orse ridin'," as the bluejackets call it. This was the first thing we always did on getting into harbour if we could scrape up money enough to hire an animal, though it was not always a horse, but any animal with four legs that could kick up its heels and gallop—horse, mule, or ass. Of course we raced, and generally managed to get plenty of exercise and full value for our money, though not uncommonly we were sorry for ourselves for some days afterwards; and on this particular occasion I remember that one of my messmates who had won most of the races was unable to sit down with any comfort for more than a week afterwards. We all went bathing next day, and it was obvious that his racing victories had not left him unscathed.

It was at Teneriffe that Nelson met with his first defeat and lost his arm; and in the principal church in the town of Santa Cruz several British flags are displayed in a glass case high up on the wall. They are the ensigns of the boats that

were sunk or captured on that occasion; and the story goes that these flags were once "cut out" by a party of British bluejackets who were on shore on leave from a ship lying in the roadstead; but the Admiralty did not approve of this mistaken act of patriotism, and ordered the flags to be returned and the sailors to be severely punished; and now the flags are high up on the wall and well out of reach.

Shortly after leaving Teneriffe we got into the north-east trade wind, and went bowling along gaily enough, with stunsails alow and aloft. The present generation of men-of-war's men, with their fast steamers and their hurry-scurry to get to their next port, know nothing of the placid joy of sailing down a trade wind with every stitch of canvas set and drawing, and the ship gliding peacefully along at six or seven knots an hour, with nothing for the watch to do save occasionally to shift over the stunsails from starboard to port, or vice versa. But on the other hand, they are saved all the anxieties and rough work of a gale of wind, which now means very little to them; but to us a gale, or, in short, any bad weather, meant not only discomfort, but also called forth the exercise of the best seamanship on the part of the officers and severe manual labour and also good seamanship on the part of the crew; for it took real seamen—and not merely men in blue frocks—to take in the fourth reef of a topsail in a gale of wind, or to furl a top-gallant sail or a royal that had been carried as long as possible in a rising breeze. So I think we were justly entitled to indulge in a little *dolce far niente*,

and make the most of the fine weather when we got into the balmy Trades.

One day while we were sailing down the Trades and getting near the line, we seemed to get into the home of the flying-fish. It was not merely that an occasional one rose and flitted away aslant the wind, lightly touching the crests of the waves; but the sea appeared to be alive with them. They rose in shoals all round the ship, and under the bows there was a continuous stream of them rising, pursued by their relentless enemies the dolphin, the bonito, and the albacore. The former of these fish I have already described in another chapter; he is the dolphin of the sailor, but the coryphee or coryphaena of the naturalist. The bonito is like a big, stout mackerel, and the albacore like a still bigger one: he is, in fact, the largest of the mackerel family, and is well known in the Mediterranean as the "Tunny." Cotgrave describes him as "a certain fish of the Indian sea which is very good meat": but on the present occasion he was making very good meat of the flying-fish; and although we tried with both bait and fish spear to make him meat for ourselves, we could not get one that day. I sat for several hours on the end of the jib-boom, dangling a bait and watching the chase, and I think it was one of the most fascinating dramas I ever saw—these big fish gobbling up the little ones. "All nature red with ravening tooth and claw," or—"that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season"—whichever way you like to look at it. And as we had been for many days on salt grub and wanted very much to eat the albacore ourselves, we could not help

admiring them for eating the flying-fish and catching them so cleverly. From my commanding position at the end of the jib-boom I could look straight down on the strange scene and see what happened. There was a shoal of some dozen albacore which kept swimming along just ahead of the ship. Sometimes one or two of them would dart off on either bow or right ahead for thirty or forty yards, and then drop back again until they were straight under where I was sitting. The ship—which was going about seven knots—seemed to make the flying-fish rise out of the water and spread their wings and soar away to the right or left or right ahead. In the latter case I could see exactly what happened. As the flying-fish rose, one of the albacore darted off in pursuit and kept almost underneath him until he dropped into the water again: then there was a splash like the rise of a salmon and the flying-fish flew no more. But the albacore did not always wait until the flying-fish touched the water, for on several occasions I saw them actually take their prey in the air, by making a huge jump out of the water; and I remember once reading a book called "Hall's Fragments," wherein the writer describes a somewhat similar scene and records that he had seen the albacore "almost" catch the flying-fish in the air; but I saw him actually doing it; and on more than one occasion I saw, within a few yards of me, the great fish leap high out of the water, catch his prey in the air, and descend again with a plunge and with the two wings of the flying-fish sticking out, one each side of his mouth. There was a man down on the dolphin-striker

(a spar under the bowsprit) with the five-pronged fish grains, trying to spear one of the albacore, but he never succeeded on this occasion in making a good shot; he did not even appear to frighten them; they seemed to regard his efforts as rather a lark; just a little extra splash and nothing more. On other occasions I have seen albacore speared and dolphin caught with a bait; but on this day we had no luck, save the luck of watching a series of most exciting hunts.

Whilst sailing down the Trades the monotony of the night watches was greatly relieved by the men of the watch singing on the forecastle. There was little danger of waking the watch below. They slept sound enough, and beyond occasionally shifting over a stunsail, heaving the log, and calling "All's well," or rather the nautical equivalent of their look-out station, there was very little for the men of the watch to do; so they sang, and sang lustily, and as my watch-station was on the forecastle I got the benefit of the music. There was a certain pleasing variety in the songs; some topical, some sentimental, some comic, and some dismal and lugubrious. Some of the comic and topical ones were not quite proper or fit for publication; though I am bound to say some of the sentimental and mournful songs were quite as popular as the naughty ones. Amongst the dismal ditties was "The wreck of the *Ramillies*." The *Ramillies* was a line-of-battle ship and she was lying at anchor in Cawsand Bay (before Plymouth break-water was built) when a gale came on from the south-east and she dragged her anchors and

went ashore, broke up, and nearly all hands were drowned. I can only remember two verses of the song. The first verse was :—

> "Now it happened upon a certain day
> That the *Ramillies* at her anchors lay
> When a gale came on from east-south-east
> And the stormy billows frothed like yeast."

Then she drags her anchors and goes ashore and

> "The bos'n cried out 'My merry men all
> Now listen unto me when I pipe my call,
> Launch out your boats your lives to save,
> Or else you will find a watery grave.'"

I have heard many a bos'n pipe his call, but I never heard one pipe a call like that, or talk about watery graves; but then I have never been shipwrecked, save once, and that was on the Cam at Cambridge; but that is another story.

Most of the songs had choruses, in which all the watch joined, and awoke an echo out of the foresail and the lower stunsail.

There was one sentimental song that was often called for. It was the song of the betrayed maiden, and very doleful. I only remember one complete verse of it, which ran thus :—

> "I wish my baby it was born,
> Sat smiling on its daddy's knee,
> And I was under the cold, cold ground
> With the green grass waving over me."

Besides the songs there were recitations of various sorts, some comic and some tragic, and these were

usually accompanied by a good deal of action. There was a stoker named Slade who was the life and soul of the whole business: he could not only sing an immense variety of songs—mostly topical—but he could recite by the hour, and without becoming tedious. He had a wonderful memory and could repeat the whole of "Marmion" and the "Lady of the Lake" from beginning to end; but he was not satisfied with merely repeating, he acted as well, and one of his favourite pieces, and also one of the most popular on the forecastle, was the combat between Fitz James and Roderick Dhu. There was no doubt a good deal of rant about it, but the audience did not object to this, and with a broomstick for a claymore and a marine's shako for a plumed bonnet he could bring the house down as often as he liked. This was what he called "giving 'em a bit of Sir Walter."

These peaceful idylls we exchanged one night for a real fight, and a grand fight it was, between Bob Crump, the captain of the foretop, and Joe Smith, the big marine artilleryman. Joe Smith was reputed to be the strongest man in the ship; he could pick up the pinnace's twelve-pounder brass gun and chuck it up on his shoulder as easily as most men could shoulder their hammocks, but he had not much science, nor was he nearly so active as Bob Crump, who, being a first-class petty officer, might very properly have declined to meet a private of the marines on the field of honour, for it was like a knight jousting with a squire; but Bob was not the man to stand upon his dignity in such a case, or to appeal to points of

etiquette or punctilio when the credit of his cloth was concerned; so the fight was duly arranged by their respective backers. I have no idea what the fight was about, nor does it matter in the least, for when two schoolboys, two men, or two nations want to fight, there is never any difficulty in finding a reason, notwithstanding that the one given is rarely, if ever, the true one. So the fight came off on the forecastle, about three bells in the first watch, and I sat on the breech of the sixty-eight-pounder gun and watched it. Strictly speaking, I ought to have tried to stop it, or at least given information to the master-at-arms and ship's police, as fighting is not allowed in our fighting service; but I could not find it in my heart to play the sneak and spoil sport; besides which, Bob Crump was my special chum amongst the sailors. I was midshipman of the foretop and Crump was captain of the top, and a fine seaman too, and I wanted to see him lick the marine, which I think he would have done if the fight had not been stopped. But it was a grand fight as far as it went. Science and activity versus stolid strength and dogged endurance. Bob walked round the big joey like a cooper round a cask, getting in some lightning-like blows on his figure-head; but he did not get them in for nothing, for he was twice knocked clean off his legs by the sledge-hammer blows of his huge adversary; but you might as well have knocked down an india-rubber man, for he was up again smiling and at 'em again almost before you could see he was down, and just as if nothing had happened. I verily believe Bob would have won if the fight

could have been finished. They both had their shoes and stockings off, of course, and "the ring" only spoke in whispers. No cheering, not even by the marines when Bob was knocked down: but alas! the master-at-arms and his myrmidons got wind of it somehow and came up and stopped the best fight I ever saw.

I do not think there was anything like a deep or permanent ill-feeling between the bluejackets and the marines in consequence of this fight, or for any other reason. There never has been in any ship I have ever served in. There is naturally a certain amount of rivalry between the two branches of the Service, where their respective duties appear to clash or to interlace: such as the rivalry in shooting between a marine-manned gun and a bluejacket-manned gun, or in rifle shooting, or even in boat-work; for I have frequently seen a marine boat's crew beat a good crew of bluejackets. But this rivalry—so far as my experience goes—does not produce anything in the shape of unworthy jealousy or ill-feeling. Jack and Joe are usually the best of friends. Each recognizes and admires the other's special qualifications, and they agree to pull together for the honour of their ship and of the Service. The instance which I gave above of Lieutenant Woollcombe, R.M.A., undertaking voluntarily and without pay the whole of the gunnery duties of the *Retribution*, although it was a special case of zeal for the honour of his ship, yet is fairly typical of the spirit in which the marine comes on board, to be ready for anything "per mare per terram."

There is an old story (a chestnut, no doubt, for

my well-informed brother officers) about a dialogue between a bluejacket and a marine. The sailor says to the marine, "What are you —— turkeys doin' aboard 'ere?" To which the marine replies "What are we doin' aboard here? Why, we's come 'ere to keep you —— flatfoots from eating one another." And there can be no doubt whatever that the answer is founded on fact, for the marines have invariably—and often under the most trying circumstances—stood loyal and true and supported the officers, when the seamen have been in a state of active or nascent mutiny. It may be, and probably it is, the case that with our present educated and highly trained seamen there is no danger of mutiny; but whatever the original object of embarking soldiers in our ships may have been, the present corps of Marine Light Infantry and artillery have proved to be of such inestimable value to the navy, that the proposal to disband them, or to use them as garrison troops for our coaling-stations, has been regarded with little short of consternation by the vast majority of those naval officers whose long sea-service has taught them to value our amphibious soldiers at their true worth.

Unfortunately we have some cranks in the navy. People possessed of an inflated opinion of their own wisdom and powers of organization and reform, and who imagine that every fad they choose to label "reform" immediately becomes so. The scheme which was launched in 1902 by the Admiralty on the nominal responsibility of the misguided Lord Selborne was a case in point, as it was calculated—if not intended—to prepare

the way for the abolition of the marines by undermining their efficiency, through depriving them of their own officers and giving them the job-services of naval officers. It was regarded as a most undeserved insult by the whole corps of marines, and was indeed a farcical proposal which must have totally destroyed all *esprit de corps*, and consequently all efficiency. Happily this "reform" has been reversed, in time to save the situation, and marine officers are again being entered direct, so that we may hope the long-suffering and loyal corps will be subjected to no more indignities, and that the country may look forward to a continuance of the ubiquitous and invaluable services of our amphibious soldiers.

After this digression I must now return to the *Retribution*, which sailed leisurely down the Trades until she came to the calm belt in the region of the equator, where she got up steam, connected her paddle-wheels, paddled through the calms and the torrential rains until she got into the south-east Trades, and then sped along merrily for Rio Janeiro, once more under sail.

The ceremony of crossing the line has been so often described by abler pens than mine, that I will not trouble the reader with a detailed description of it in this case. All I know is that I was very carefully shaved, notwithstanding that I had not yet grown a beard, and then ducked in the pond by the bears, one of whom was my chum Bob Crump, so I got off very cheaply from this part of the ceremony.

When I use the word "chum" I do not intend

it to be understood that the friendship between a midshipman and a seaman was quite on the same familiar footing as that between two messmates; but Crump and I used often to sit up in the foretop together after the evening evolution of reef topsails, and spin yarns to each other; and although I was generally the listener I am afraid I became rather more familiar with Bob than I ought to have done. But no harm came of it, for he was a fine character as well as a tip-top seaman, and never presumed in the smallest degree on my familiarity.

I remember that one day while we were steaming through the calms in the region of the line we had a very heavy hail shower, with hailstones as big as peas. Ice on the equator, descending from the clouds, was like manna in the wilderness. Where did it come from? That we did not know; but we collected a good deal of it to cool our luke-warm condensed water, which always had a strong flavour of the boilers.

The entrance to Rio Janeiro harbour is one of the most beautiful views I have ever seen, and the harbour itself is, I think, the finest in the world, with perhaps one exception, and that is the little-known harbour of Mesampho on the south coast of Korea. I know Sydney harbour, and Brest, and a good many other; but I would unhesitatingly give the palm to Mesampho as being the most perfect natural harbour in the world; and now that our enterprising friends the Japs have got it they will no doubt make the most of it. But for the beauty of its surrounding scenery it cannot compare with Rio; which latter,

however, is often very unhealthy, and when we arrived there on May 4, 1857, the yellow fever was so bad on shore that we could give no leave to the men, and we did not stay there a day longer than we could help, but started off again for our next port of call, which was to be Stanley harbour in the Falkland Islands.

A few days after leaving Rio, when we were abreast of the River Plate, the ship was struck by a violent storm in the middle of the night, and the hands were turned up to shorten sail. I spent about two hours in the foretop, where our first orders were to close reef the foretop-sail, and then a message (for we could hear no orders from the deck) to furl it; which we did eventually, but it was a tough job. I have never—before or since—seen an electric storm of such violence or so long continued as that one was. It was not only that the wind and the rain beat upon us as if all the furies of the sky had been let loose, but the lightning was almost continuous and wonderfully vivid. We seemed to be enveloped in a great thunder-cloud, for each clap succeeded the flash instantaneously, and we could smell the lightning. Yes, we could smell it quite distinctly. The ship was struck more than once, but the electric current passed innocuously down the Snow-Harris lightning-conductors and did no harm. I have often wondered what would have happened to a ship in the old days, before the Snow-Harris conductor was invented. She would certainly have had some of her spars shattered and probably have been set on fire. The smell that we all smelt was most likely caused by the

heating of the lightning-conductors, which had not time to get cool between the flashes. It was a sight to see, was that electric storm. We were of course all wet to the skin, and the foretop sail yard had not been properly laid for furling the sail, so that the footrope of the sail—a great four-inch rope—came swinging back over the yard, beating the men on their backs with such violence that I thought it would knock all the wind out of them and finally knock them off the yard; but they stuck to their work and furled the sail, like the fine seamen they were. I overheard a remark of one of them as he struggled in off the yard and got down into the top—" A small smell of hell about that Bill, wasn't there ? "

During the height of this storm we were quite blinded by the lightning. Between the flashes all was black darkness and we could see nothing of ropes, sails, or rigging, until they were illuminated by the next flash. The lightning appeared to be all round us and in amongst us. I have seen many thunderstorms in many parts of the world, but I never saw another like this one.

We had a stormy passage all the way to the Falkland Islands, almost continuous gales, and I see by my log—which is a copy of the ship's log—that on several occasions the force of the wind is recorded as 10 and 11 by the Beaufort scale, and this means very heavy weather. Nevertheless, we arrived safely at Stanley harbour in the East Falkland Island, and a snug little harbour it is, small but perfectly land-locked.

The Falkland Islands are said to be one of the stormiest places on the face of the globe. No

trees will grow there—they are all blown down "before they are up"; and to the best of my recollection we did not see a bush more than six or eight feet high. This was in the eastern island. I have heard that the western island is more fertile, or at any rate less barren, but we did not go there, so I cannot speak from personal experience.

The old ship had badly strained her rudder in the recent gales, so we unshipped it, hauled it up on shore, and set the carpenters to work to patch it up, which they did so effectually that it lasted for nearly two years, but finally gave out altogether when we were in the East Indies, and we had to build a new one for ourselves at Trincomalee dockyard. The repairs to the rudder delayed us for eight days in Stanley harbour, and we all went shooting. Everybody has heard of the Falkland Island geese, and they may be seen to-day in St. James's Park. The upland geese—as they are generally called—are excellent eating; but there are also immense numbers and different varieties of other geese and these are known as "kelp geese." Alas! our ornithological education had been so sadly neglected that we did not know the difference with the feathers on, though we soon found it out, when we came to cook and eat them. All the birds we shot were kelp geese, about as fishy as cormorants; but they were not wasted, for we gave them to our marine sevants, who ate them all and declared them to be excellent. "Some flavour about them," as they said. One day one of my messmates and I borrowed a small boat

and started off very early in the morning to go and shoot wild geese. Nobody in the midshipmen's berth owned a gun at this time, though I got one later, so my messmate and I took a couple of ship's rifles, and we spent several hours the night before cutting up bullets into slugs. We got plenty of powder from the gunner, and with loose paper for wads, we started off in our little boat to make a bag, and we did. The geese were very tame; they were not at all accustomed to be shot at, so that we had no difficulty in getting a boat-load of them, and there were so many different varieties of them that we felt sure *some at least* must be uplanders; but they were not, and they all had to go to the marines. They must have been very strong, for a hungry midshipman is not over-fastidious, and I have several times eaten shark myself. Penguins were numerous, but we did not shoot them, as we knew *they* were fishy and only fit for Antarctic explorers.

From Stanley harbour we made a rapid passage to the Straits of Magellan, before an easterly gale, and the old ship made twelve knots for several hours; the highest speed she ever made.

The scenery in the Straits of Magellan is the wildest and grandest I have ever seen. Towering mountains with great shining glaciers coming right down to the water's edge. But the worst of this route, and the reason why it was generally avoided by sailing ships, is the fact that the water is so deep and the shores so precipitous that there are great stretches in which no anchorage is to be found; and as the prevailing weather in the Straits is a succession of violent squalls and flat

calms, it is rather ticklish work trying to get a sailing ship through them. Still, it has been done, and Magellan did it. Anson did not. He went round the Horn and suffered badly.

It was the month of June, and thus the depth of winter when we passed through the Straits of Magellan; yet, in spite of the cold, the natives, who came off to us in their canoes, were nearly naked. We anchored several times, and at one place we stayed for two days to cut wood for the fires to try and spin out our coal supply. Every axe, hatchet, and saw in the ship was requisitioned for the work, and a great pile of wood was brought on board. I remember that the engineers were rather sceptical about the value of wood for firing the boilers; and as the proceeds of two days' wood-cutting was all burnt in half-an-hour (so they said), the experiment was not repeated.

The natives on the two sides of the Straits are distinct races, and it is said they do not mix or have any communication with each other. The Patagonians on the north side are big men and not at all bad-looking, whilst the Fuegans on the south side are dwarfs and a very low type of savages. They are said to be cannibals, and I believe they have occasionally eaten missionaries; but their usual diet is roots, seaweed, and fish, which latter they are very clever at spearing. Some of them came off in their canoes while we were lying at anchor. They came to beg, and seemed to appreciate almost anything that was thrown to them, particularly food; but they were very suspicious of treachery, and nothing would induce them to come on board. I expect there must

have been some tradition of kidnapping, though I don't know what use they could be to anybody, if he bagged a dozen of them.

Directly we passed out of the western end of the Straits we encountered a heavy nor'west gale, which blew us away to the south, until we got nearly into the latitude of Cape Horn.

One day it was discovered that the foretop-mast was badly sprung, and we were ordered to shift it. This was not by any means an easy job, as the ship was labouring heavily, and we took four hours to shift it and set up the rigging again. I have never been so cold in all my life as I was on that occasion, and when the work was finished and it was time to come down from aloft I had no feeling in my hands, they were quite dead. The men offered to lower me down with a rope's end, but I managed to get down by myself, by reeving my arms round the shrouds and holding on by the insides of my elbows, so to speak.

The morning of the day we arrived at Valparaiso (the Vale of Paradise) I had the morning watch, and saw an extraordinary sight; that is to say, I saw land a hundred and sixty miles off. We sighted the land at daylight, and what we saw was the great mountain of Aconcagua, 22,000 feet. It is a hundred miles from the shore, and the nearest land to us at the time was sixty miles. The sun rose immediately behind the mountain, and the outline of the latter was perfectly clear and distinct; but the moment the sun was up we lost sight of the land and did not see any again for many hours, though we were sailing straight at it, ten knots an hour. The captain

was called, and came up, but could see nothing, and said we must have been mistaken, as it was impossible to see land at that distance; but he was wrong, with all his nautical experience, for the silhouette of that great mountain between us and the rising sun was a sight never to be forgotten.

Valparaiso certainly was a paradise for us midshipmen, for we could hire horses for one dollar for an afternoon ride, and some good gallops we had. There was also a pack of English foxhounds, kept by a Mr. Garland, an English merchant, and I went out twice with them; but we had to pay three dollars for a mount with the hounds. This was my first foxhunt, though not my last, and I was given the brush, although I was certainly not the first in at the death; but I suppose the sight of a little midshipman in uniform, galloping for all he was worth on a hired "screw," softened the master's heart, and I kept that brush for many years afterwards. The foxes were little yellow creatures, not nearly so big as English foxes, and there was no jumping; just hard galloping over a very rough country.

When we arrived at Valparaiso the admiral on the station was being relieved, and both flagships were lying in Valparaiso Bay. The *Monarch* (84) was the homeward-bound ship, and the *Ganges* (84), with the new admiral, was her relief. Both these were sailing line-of-battle ships, and the morning the *Monarch* was to leave there was a flat calm, so all the boats of the squadron were sent to tow her out clear of the land, and I spent about three hours in the

*Retribution's* pinnace tugging away at her, until a light breeze off the land filled her sails, and away she went, with the band playing the well-known air of "Homeward Bound" and the crew cheering.

Valparaiso was also a paradise for the men, who got their first leave on shore here since the ship left England, and Bob Crump spun me some amusing yarns afterwards about his doings on shore; but I am afraid they are not fit for publication.

After leaving Valparaiso we went up the coast as far as Callao, which is the seaport of Lima, and we then spent a year cruising up and down this coast between Callao and Valparaiso, never going to the northward of the former; so that we did not see Vancouver or the northern part of the station at all. Most of this year was spent in dogging the footsteps of a rebel Peruvian steam frigate which had the audacity to stop and search the English mail steamers that ran between Panama and Valparaiso; and of course that could not be allowed. There was a revolution going on in Peru (as there generally is), and one party had the best of it on shore, but the other party had command of the sea; that is to say, the whole of the navy was on their side, and the whole effective navy consisted of this one frigate. She was called the *Apurimac*, and was built and armed on the Thames. She was a powerful vessel of her day, and being a screw, she was, of course, a better fighting vessel than the *Retribution*, though their armaments were about equal.

To the best of my recollection the names of the

two Presidents of the Republic were Castilla and Blevanco; but it really does not matter, as I am not writing history. The party which we will call the Castilla party had Lima (the capital), Callao (the seaport of Lima), and all the other seaports with the exception of Islay, to which the Blevanco party held tenaciously, for if they had lost it the *Apurimac* would have had no status as a fighting ship, and would have been to all intents and purposes a pirate.

The *Apurimac* was commanded by Signor Montaro, said to be a desperate man who would stick at nothing, and he and his officers and crew were certainly in rather a tight corner, with their one small seaport town and that with nothing but an open anchorage in which to replenish coal and stores and refit. They were regarded by the Castilla party as rebels and pirates, and if they had been captured the leaders would certainly have been shot.

The object of Montaro in searching the English mail steamers was to intercept supplies of arms and ammunition to the opposite party; but as we did not acknowledge the right of search upon the high seas for a vessel in that ambiguous position, we followed her like her shadow, with the intention of preventing her—by force, if necessary. Our action must have been extremely irritating to Montaro, for whenever he got under way we got under way and followed him, and when he anchored we anchored near him, so that we could watch him; and if he put out his lights and eluded us at night, we soon picked him up again by information from

passing vessels. At last he lost all patience, and sent an officer on board to say that he would stand it no longer, and that if we continued to shadow him in the way we were doing he would fire into us and sink us. "Blaze away," says old Barker, "whenever you like," or words to that effect. So the next time we followed him into one of the anchorages and anchored close alongside him we did so with our men at quarters and guns loaded; but he did not shoot. He probably thought he had enemies enough already, and instead of shooting, he invited the captain and officers to a champagne lunch, and promised he would not stop any more English ships. He kept his word, and we ceased to shadow him.

One night, while we were lying at Islay and the *Apurimac* was not there, the Castilla faction made an attack upon the town, which continued nearly all night, with a vast expenditure of ammunition and much cheering. The little town had been fortified with bales of cotton, and at daylight in the morning it was obvious that the attack had been repulsed, as the standards of Blevanco still floated above the cotton bales; but as the assault on the town had evidently been a very determined and vigorous one, and as it was known that the Blevanco army was not very well off for doctors, Captain Barker sent both our doctors with their sick-bay staff and all appliances to render assistance to the wounded; but as they found that nobody had been hurt, they came on board again; so it was assumed that only blank cartridges had been used during the attack, by both sides,

by arrangement: which, indeed, would be a very sensible plan in all cases of civil war, as there is not much profit in shooting one's own countrymen.

During the year we spent on the coasts of Chili and Peru we had such fine weather that it became absolutely monotonous, and one almost wished for a gale of wind to stir things up a bit. It is truly a pacific ocean from Valparaiso to Panama, and as this was the part of it first known to Europeans, there can be no doubt that it hence received its name, which, however, is not applicable to the whole ocean, the western part of it being anything but pacific. It is now known that all the great cyclonic storms which visit China, known as typhoons (high winds) start on their devastating journeys from the Philippine Islands, swing round in a curve through the China seas, and finally expend themselves in the sea of Japan. Some few erratic ones pass right through the central provinces of China and blow themselves out in the Gulf of Pechili.

In 1857, the guano industry at the Chincha Islands was in full swing, and a large fleet of merchant-ships of all nations used to lie in the roadstead loading guano. These little islets off the coast of Peru, with their valuable deposit of guano, were rented from the Peruvian Government (or one of the Governments) by the English firm of Antony Gibbs & Co. at a very big rent; I have heard the figure stated as £1,000,000 a year, and I think it probable that this is no exaggeration, as the great nitrate deposits in Chili had only just been discovered and were not yet

working, so that guano enjoyed a monopoly in the market.

We paid several visits to the Chincha Islands in the *Retribution*; but it was not a pleasant place. The ships had to lie to leeward of the islets for the sake of shelter, and the air was full of a fine, pungent, yellow dust, which soon coated the ship from truck to water-line, just as if she had been painted yellow. We did not often land, but it was a curious sight to see this great and valuable guano deposit being worked. It was as much as 20 feet thick in some places, and had become so hard that it had to be quarried like rock. These islands had been the home and the nesting-place of the myriads of sea birds, principally gannets, which swarm all along this coast, and as this district is, practically speaking, rainless, there was nothing to wash away their droppings, so the accumulation of many centuries resulted in this immense deposit of valuable manure.

At the time of our visit it was said that it would all be worked out in about fourteen years at the rate it was then being removed; but I believe it lasted a good deal longer than was expected. At any rate, I always heard that it made the fortunes of Antony Gibbs & Co., the senior partner of which firm afterwards became Lord Aldenham.

Another place on this rainless, pacific coast at which we spent a good deal of our time was Arica, the seaport of the city of Tacna. Arica was afterwards completely destroyed by an earthquake and the great tidal wave which usually

accompanies earthquakes. At the time of this visitation there was an American steamer lying in the roadstead, and the wave took her two miles inland and left her there. The distance from the sea was too great to make it worth while bringing her back again, so her owners, being strictly practical people, cut windows and doors in her and turned her into a family hotel.

Fifty years ago there was a considerable whaling industry still going on in this part of the Pacific, by English and American whalers, and beautiful little vessels the whalers were, of about 600 tons, just like men-of-war, neat and trim, yards squared, sails neatly furled, well painted, and with six whaleboats, three of a side, hoisted at the davits. Whaling was still a profitable business; but I have not visited this coast since 1857, so I do not know what goes on now.

One afternoon, when we were lying in Arica Bay, we counted sixteen whales blowing and disporting themselves within sight of the ship, some of them being quite close in to the shore. The theory was that they came in to shallow water to scrape the barnacles and other parasites off their bodies against the shingle and the rocks; but I do not know if this is correct. Anyhow, there they were, and one day when the cutter was going ashore with officers she "grounded" on the back of one of the whales which had at that moment come up to blow. It was an exciting moment for those in the boat, for had he cocked his fluke—*i.e.*, lifted his huge tail—he would have given them all an aerial voyage and a

swim; but as it was nothing happened. All these whales that we saw on this occasion were rorquals or finbacks. Not the so-called right whale nor the cachalot, which are the really valuable whales and the only ones which the English whalers hunted, though it was said that the American whalers took the rorqual, which is much less rich in blubber than either the right whale or the cachalot, and has much shorter and less valuable whalebone, and no spermaceti.

I read lately in an encyclopædia, under the heading "Whale," that "The mother displayed great affection for her offspring, of which whale-fishers sometimes take undue advantage, harpooning the young one—itself of little value—in order to secure the mother."

Had the writer of the above read Frank Bullen's "Cruise of the *Cachalot*," he would have known something of the penalty for infanticide.

The year which we spent on the South-west Coast of South America was, on the whole, a dull and uninteresting one. The towns were like all Spanish-American towns, white, glaring, and insanitary, and the country was arid, treeless, and unlovely; and as very few of us could speak the language, even indifferently, we did not mix much with the natives.

One of the recreations indulged in by some of our officers who were gifted with a taste for archæology was searching for Incas' remains. There is some chemical constituent in the soil of this coast which, coupled with the extreme dryness of the climate, seems to preserve almost indefinitely any animal remains that are buried

in it; and thus some of our industrious diggers were rewarded with valuable prizes in the shape of an Inca's eye, a jawbone, a tooth, a shinbone, and even in some rare cases a piece of a garment or a trinket which had been buried with one of Pizarro's quarry when he Christianized this land some centuries ago. One day one of our zealous explorers appears to have got out of the regular track of the Incas, and to have been caught in the act of hauling out by the hair of her head a lady who had only been buried quite a short time and was probably not an Inca at all! He had to put her back and apologize, and was known hereafter as the body-snatcher.

It has always been a puzzle to me to know how long a person ought to have been buried before it becomes proper to dig him up and examine his bones for the furtherance of anthropological research. Anyhow the body-snatcher was a long way out in his date.

One afternoon, while we were lying at anchor in Callao harbour, the news came on board that the British Minister at Lima had been murdered; but as it was proved that the cause of the murder was absolutely unpolitical, and merely some domestic affair connected with a lady, we did not bombard Callao nor land the marines to occupy Lima.

# CHAPTER V

The *Retribution* sails to China—The Sandwich Islands—Duck-hunting—The Gulf of Pechili—A cloud of dragon-flies—Shanghai—Japan's foreign policy—A brief historical digression—Commodore Perry.

IN the month of March, 1858, the *Retribution* to our great delight, received orders to go to China, where one of our many differences of opinion with the Celestials was being settled by the last argument of diplomacy; and as the *Shannon* and several other ships on their way to China had been diverted to Calcutta on account of the Indian Mutiny, we were ordered across the Pacific to augment the China Squadron; and joyful news it was, as we were quite tired of pottering up and down the coast of Peru and Chili.

For our long voyage of 10,000 miles to Hongkong we tried a new plan with our paddle-wheels, to improve our sailing, as we only carried coal enough for a very small fraction of the distance. Instead of disconnecting the wheels and letting them revolve, we took off half the floats from each wheel and then lashed the wheel, so that there was no resistance save that of the thin iron framework. This rendered the ship to all intents and purposes a sailing ship, as she could not use steam even in an emergency; and

the plan was not considered a success. It did not appear to improve our sailing appreciably. The frames got bent, without the support of the floats, and we had a very troublesome and tedious job in getting the latter in their places again to steam into Honolulu harbour in the Sandwich Islands, at which half-way house we called on our way to Hongkong.

These islands have been so often described by travellers that it is unnecessary here to say much more than that they struck us as being very beautiful, with their great mountains and cliffs rising sheer out of the deep blue sea, the slopes and lowlands covered with rich green tropical verdure. They are entirely volcanic, and the island of Hawaii contains the largest active volcano in the world. Mauna Loa rises to a height of 14,000 feet, within 1,800 feet of the loftiest of the Swiss Alps, and its crater is nine miles in circumference, perpetually filled with a sea of incandescent lava, which in times of its most active eruptions sends great rivers of lava down to the sea. Our visit coincided with one of these great eruptions, which lasted for three years, from 1856 to 1859; and at night, even from a long distance, the sight was magnificent.

In 1858 the Sandwich Islands were a nominally independent kingdom, and Kamehameha III sat upon the throne of his ancestors, though it was said that in reality the English and American missionaries ruled the docile natives; but they could not rule the visitors, nor arrest the terrible scourge of a loathsome disease which had been

introduced, it was said, by the whalers, and which was playing havoc with the unfortunate islanders.

I visited these beautiful islands once again, in 1900, when great changes had taken place: they had been partly Japanned and partly Americanized, and now they are wholly the latter.

Although one of the islands of this group had been seen by Gaetano in 1542, Captain Cook was their real discoverer, in 1778, and it was here that the renowned navigator was murdered by the natives on the beach at Hawaii during his third and last voyage.

We only spent three days at Honolulu, and of course we all went riding. We also had a duck-hunt. By this time I had become the proud possessor of a double-barrelled gun—a muzzle-loader, of course—sent out to me as a birthday present by my eldest brother, and as this gun was the only one in the midshipmen's berth during the whole commission, I had plenty of friends. "Pat, lend me your gun." And although I very seldom lent it, that gun on many occasions was the source of an acceptable change of diet in our mess, especially when we were up the Yangzte amongst the Chinese pheasants.

The duck-hunt I have alluded to was rather an exciting kind of sport. There were two lakes about three miles apart, and between them there was a long narrow ridge of elevated ground. We all had ponies, and stationed ourselves on the ridge with our guns. Some natives were

then sent down to disturb the ducks alternately and send them flying across the ridge from one lake to the other. The ridge was more than a mile long, so that it was impossible to foretell where the ducks would cross and where to station the four guns. The ducks, however, when once they had started, flew very straight, so that we had time to jump on to our ponies, gallop along the ridge, cut them off and get a shot at them. We did not fire from the saddle; at least I know I did not; but the ponies had been at this game before, and were very clever about it, much cleverer than we were in bringing down the ducks, though we got a few.

After our three days' stay at Honolulu we started off again, on May 3rd, for Hongkong, sailing all the way until we got in amongst the islands and got into calms; and then we got up steam and paddled away full speed—about 8½ knots—for the anchorage, which we reached on June 12th, a very creditable passage for the old ship.

The war was not over. Operations were still going on in North China, though we were at peace with Canton and South China. Lord Elgin, our Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, had gone to Tien-tsin with full powers to make treaties, and as it was desirable that he should be well backed by a show of force, and as it was impossible to foresee what tricks, subterfuges, and evasions might be adopted by the mandarins to bamboozle the barbarian ambassador, the *Retribution* embarked at

Hongkong a field battery of artillery, R.M.A., with guns, stores, and ammunition, and paddled away for the Gulf of Pechili. It was a tight fit, I remember; for in addition to the six officers and 104 men of the battery and all the stores, we also embarked 70 Chinese coolies belonging to the so-called military train, to go and fight against their own countrymen, which John Chinaman is always ready to do if well paid for it. These coolies were never allowed to go below; there was simply no room for them, and they had to live on the upper deck during this 1,500-mile voyage. We rigged up tents for them and made them as comfortable as we could, but as it was the rainy season, they were generally wet, both day and night; yet they were always cheerful and laughing, and ready to do anything they were told to do. Money and good food have a wonderful effect upon the patriotism of some people.

Fifty odd years ago the captain of a man-of-war was never asked whether he had room in his ship to carry the Grand Lama and all his suite from Lhassa to Timbuctoo. He was simply told to do it, and he did.

On one occasion I was first lieutenant of a little steam sloop of 570 tons, 11 guns, and a crew of 120—a vessel which sailors described as a "bug-trap," in which there was not room to swing a cat—and we had to carry a company of 100 black troops with two white sergeants and their wives from Jamaica to Belize. How they did smell! I mean the niggers.

When the *Retribution* arrived in the Gulf of

Pechili and anchored off the mouth of the Peiho River in four fathoms, seven miles from the land, we found that there was to be no fighting. Lord Elgin was on shore at Tien-tsin signing treaties, and the mandarins had come to terms. Perhaps they heard the *Retribution* was coming.

I have already declared that I am not writing history, and it would therefore be foreign to my intentions if I were to enter into any discussion on the merits or otherwise of the various wars— or perhaps we should rather say "hostilities"— which have occurred between Great Britain and China since 1842, when a squadron sailed up the Yangtze and bombarded Nanking, and the "Boxer" rising and occupation of Peking in 1900. The latter date will ever remain memorable for the siege of the foreign legations and the splendid defence made by a handful of Europeans and Japanese against not only the so-called Boxers but the regular Chinese troops, who closely invested and besieged the very limited area of the British Legation for eight weeks, where the staffs of the various other foreign legations had taken refuge, and defended themselves successfully, though with heavy loss, until relieved by an international army composed of British, French, Germans, Italians, Austrians, Russians, and Japanese, who occupied Pekin, sent the old Empress and her Court scuttling up country, and took terrible vengeance on the Chinese for their treachery. Nor must Admiral Sir Edward Seymour's attempt to relieve Peking be forgotten—an attempt which, although it failed in its purpose, through the Chinese regulars

making common cause with the Boxers, was yet more glorious in its failure than many a much-extolled victory.

In July, 1858, there was a large international fleet lying off the mouth of the Peiho River, all making treaties at the point of the bayonet, and as Lord Elgin had made his treaty for England —soon to be broken—there was nothing further to delay us, so we discharged our artillerymen and coolies to other ships better able to accommodate them, and started off for Shanghai, towing two gunboats, the *Woodcock* and *Kestrel*. We had burnt a good deal of our coal in hurrying north from Hongkong, and it was doubtful if we had enough to take us to Shanghai, even without towing the gunboats. No sooner, however, had we put to sea, than the chief engineer reported (I see by my midshipman's log) that he had thirty tons less coal on board than he was supposed to have; so we had to make sail; but the winds were very light and baffling, with a great deal of calm and we made very little headway. Occasionally we anchored in this shallow sea, to avoid being drifted to the northward again; and one afternoon, when we were lying at anchor out of sight of land, the weather being very close and sultry, we saw a great dark cloud approaching the ship from the direction of the shore, which was about fifty miles off. The cloud came slowly nearer and nearer. It did not look like rain, and presently, as it enveloped the ship, we found it was composed of dragon-flies. No, they were not locusts; I have seen plenty of locusts; they were the insects known in England as dragon-flies, and

very big ones. Were they sent to reproach us, as emblems of the Dragon throne which we had defied and humiliated? It was an extraordinary sight. They evidently made for the ship to get a resting-place for the soles of their feet, but many missed and fell exhausted in the calm sea. The masts, the yards, the rigging, and every rope in the ship were literally encrusted with them and the sea was peppered with them. It was a very sultry evening, and about six o'clock we all bathed. I remember the strange experience of diving into a sea of dragon-flies, which stuck to our arms and shoulders, got into our hair, and quite spoilt our swim. A light air then came off from the land, so we weighed the anchor and made sail to the southward with our two gun-boats in tow; and at midnight, just as the watch was changing, we were struck by a terrific squall, which laid the old ship nearly on her beam ends, and we had to let fly and clew up everything.

We wondered whether the visitation of the dragon-flies was connected in any way with the squall. But if they were blown fifty miles off the land—where they certainly did not want to go—why did we not get the wind for six hours afterwards?

We got to Wusung at last and anchored below the bar. But alas! we had not kept enough coal to take us up the river to Shanghai, and not even the *Retribution* with all her sailors could sail up that tortuous and rapid stream; so I see by my midshipman's log that we "received five tons of coal from the French frigate *Audacieuse*." And then we took a pilot and steamed up to

Shanghai; but in coming up the river we fouled and dismasted two Chinese junks, one of whose huge masts fell right across our paddle-box, nearly killing Corporal Spalding at the engine-room telegraph. Corporal Spalding always took the telegraph going in or out of harbour. Nobody but a non-commissioned officer of the Royal Marines could be trusted at this important post. There were only two ways in which it could be turned, and sailors generally turned it the wrong one, just to show their contempt for steam engines and everything connected with them.

The evening we anchored off Shanghai, after being nearly two years in commission, we lost our first shipmate, William Wilkenson, one of the very smartest and cheeriest of my foretopmen; a splendid swimmer he was too, but he went down like a stone and never rose again. No one who falls overboard in the Shanghai River has much chance, however good a swimmer he may be, for not only is there a very strong current, but the water all seems to be in a state of whirlpools and overfalls, known there as "chowchow water," which overcomes the strongest swimmer.

Not long after our arrival at Shanghai we heard, to our great joy, that we were to escort Lord Elgin on his mission to Japan, where he was to go and endeavour to negotiate a treaty of friendship and commerce with that *terra incognita* of the nineteenth century.

Once more I must remind the reader that I am not writing history: yet in order that he may understand the international status of Japan at the time of Lord Elgin's mission in the autumn

of 1858, it will be necessary to take a brief sketch of Japanese foreign relations and policy up to that date.

"Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuen dynasty in China, had for some years back repeatedly sent to demand submission from Japan, but this being refused, about ten thousand of his troops attacked Tsushima and Oki in 1274. This expedition was repulsed, and some envoys dispatched to Japan in 1275, and also in 1279, were decapitated. Exasperated at this defiance, the Mongol chief collected a mighty armament, which was dispatched to Japan in 1281. The numbers of this invading force are by Japanese writers estimated at one hundred thousand Chinese, Mongol, and Korean troops. They descended upon the coast of Kiusiu, where several engagements were fought. Eventually a severe storm destroyed and dispersed the fleet, and the Japanese, taking advantage of this opportunity, vigorously attacked and completely annihilated the invaders, of whom but three are said to have escaped to tell the tale. It is not surprising that no further attempt to conquer Japan should have been made by the Mongols."

The above is taken from Brinkley's well-known "Japan."

Then we come to the sixteenth century, when Portuguese trading vessels began to arrive in Japan; and in 1549 the famous Portuguese Jesuit, Francis Xavier, landed and set to work to convert the Japanese to Christianity. His success was not great, and the general attitude of the Japanese towards the Christian religion is thus described

in Murdoch and Yamagata's "History of Japan": "The simple fact was that in matters of religion the average intelligent Japanese amongst the upper class was an indifferentist—a Laodicean or a Gallio, who cared for none of these things. To him a new religion was of far less consequence or interest than a new sauce would have been to an Englishman at the time of Voltaire. His attitude towards it, in fact, is exceedingly well indicated by Nobunaga's reply to those who questioned him about the advisability of admitting Christianity into his dominions—that the establishment of one more sect in a country counting some thirty-odd sects already could not be a matter of any real consequence."

This spirit of tolerant indifference towards Christianity might have continued had the Jesuits been satisfied with such spiritual successes as they had been able to gain; but they were not satisfied. They strove for temporal power. They plotted and intrigued against the civil Government of the people whose hospitality they were enjoying, and by their meddlesome and arrogant conduct they raised a mighty storm of revolt, which swept them and all their unhappy converts to destruction, and sealed the Empire of Japan against all foreign intrusion for more than two centuries.

But before the final catastrophe came, the Dutch and the English had found their way to Japan. The first of these to arrive was a Dutch ship, which reached the harbour of Bungo in April, 1600, and she had on board an English pilot named Adams, who has left some interesting accounts of old Japan. He lived for some time at

Yeddo (now Tokio), and he was frequently at the Court of Iyesasu. But the Portuguese were as jealous of any competition in the East as the Spaniards were of competition in the West, and did all in their power to injure the English and the Dutch. Adams says: "After wee had been there five or sixe days came a Portugall Jesuite, with other Portugalls, who reported of us that wee were pirats, and were not in the way of merchandising. Which report caused the governours and people to think evil of us: in such manner that we thought always to have been set upon crosses; which is the execution in this land for theevery and some other crimes. Thus daily more and more the Portugalls increased the justices and the people against us."

However, in spite of the machinations of the "Portugalls," Adams throve and prospered and spent the remainder of his life in Japan. He built two ships for the Emperor, in return for which he received a pension, and the Japanese ruler tried to satisfy him by giving him "a living like unto a lordship in England, with eighty or ninety husbandmen that be as my servants or slaves." Adams finally acquired a considerable influence in the country, held the rank of a Japanese Samurai, owned property, and received a salary from the English East India Company. He died in Japan without having once returned to England.

In consequence of the political intrigues of the Portuguese Jesuits, the Japanese rose in their wrath, expelled the Portuguese, and massacred all the Christian converts.

At the entrance to Nagasaki harbour on the

left-hand side there is a hill called Papenberg, the side nearest the sea being nearly perpendicular; and tradition says that from the heights of Papenberg the last of the Christian converts were hurled, to be dashed to pieces on the rocks beneath, or drowned in the sea if they got down alive. This was in 1639; and the edict of the Japanese Government which reversed its policy of toleration and practically closed Japan to all foreign intercourse for more than two hundred years, is thus given by Kämpfer: "No Japanese ship or boat whatever, nor any native of Japan, shall presume to go out of the country; whoso acts contrary to this shall die, and the ship with the crew and goods aboard shall be sequestered till further order.

"All Japanese who return from abroad shall be put to death. Whosoever discovers a priest shall have a reward of from 400 to 500 shuets of silver, and for every Christian in proportion.

"All persons who propagate the doctrines of the Catholics, or bear this scandalous name, shall be imprisoned in the ombra or common jail of the town.

"The whole race of the Portuguese, with their mothers, nurses, and whatever belongs to them, shall be banished to Macao.

"Whosoever presumes to bring a letter from abroad, or to return after he hath been banished, shall die with all his family; also whoever presumes to intercede for him shall be put to death. No nobleman nor any soldier shall be suffered to purchase anything of a foreigner."

The Portuguese ships which arrived in Japan in

1639 were sent back with a copy of this edict, without being allowed to discharge their cargoes; and thus commenced Japan's two centuries of exclusion; the only exception being that the Dutch were allowed to retain a small settlement on the island of Desima in Nagasaki harbour, but they were not permitted to pass over the bridge on to the mainland.

In 1804 the Russians tried to gain a footing in Japan. A Russian vessel came to Nagasaki having on board an ambassador from the Czar and a number of shipwrecked Japanese. The ambassador was treated with great courtesy, but was sent back with the polite message that Japan wished to have absolutely nothing to do with any foreigners other than Dutch and Chinese.

Then in 1813 a Russian ship was wrecked on the coast of Japan and the crew were taken prisoners, but not unkindly treated. The Russian Government sent the frigate *Diana* to demand their release; but failing in all his efforts to get into communication with any of the responsible authorities on shore, "Captain Rikord took a Japanese merchant, Kachi by name, back to Russia with him as a sort of hostage. He returned again to Kunoshiri, and the Russians were finally released, after having been confined for over two years. A paper was sent with them to their Government explicitly stating Japanese policy with regard to foreigners, the main substance of which was as follows ("Historian's History of the World"):—

"When you return to Russia communicate to the commanders of the coasts of Kamchatka,

Okhotsk, and others, the declaration of our bungo, which will aquaint them with the nature of the Japanese laws with respect to the arrival of foreign ships, and prevent a repetition of similar transgressions on your part.

"In our country the Christain religion is strictly prohibited, and European vessels are not suffered to enter any harbour except Nagasaki. This law does not extend to Russian vessels only. This year it has not been enforced, because we wished to communicate with your countrymen; but all that may henceforth present themselves will be driven back by cannon-balls. Bear in mind this declaration, and you cannot complain if at any future period you should experience a misfortune in consequence of your disregard of it.

"Among us there exists this law: 'If any European residing in Japan shall attempt to teach our people the Christian faith, he shall undergo a severe punishment, and shall not be restored to his own country.' As you, however, have not attempted to do so, you will accordingly be permitted to return home. Think well of this. . . . From the repeated solicitations which you have hitherto made to us, you evidently imagine that the customs of our country resemble those of your own; but you are very wrong in thinking so. In future, therefore, it will be better to say no more about a commercial connection."

From all which it would appear that the Japanese had no very pleasant recollection of their intercourse with foreigners, and that they were not captivated by the creed of Christianity—as taught by the Jesuits.

Then came along Uncle Sam with his stars and stripes, and a pushful ambition which would take no denial.

The real opening of Japan must date from the visit of Commodore Perry, of the United States Navy, with a powerful squadron, in 1853. His instructions were—

"1. To effect some permanent arrangement for the protection of American seamen and property wrecked on these islands or driven into their ports by stress of weather.

"2. The permission to American vessels to enter one or more of their ports in order to obtain supplies of provisions, water, fuel, etc., or in case of disasters, to refit so as to enable them to prosecute their voyage. It is very desirable to have permission to establish a depot for coal, if not on one of the principal islands, at least on some small, uninhabited one, of which it is said there are several in their vicinity.

"3. The permission to our vessels to enter one or more of their ports for the purpose of disposing of their cargoes by sale or barter."

This was a bold bid on the part of the United States in view of the oft-repeated declarations of the Japanese that they wished for no intrusion into their country by foreigners of any nation; and as it was thought possible that the Americans might be received with "cannon-balls," Commodore Perry was furnished with a powerful squadron, consisting of the steam frigates *Susquehana* and *Mississippi* and the steam sloops *Plymouth* and *Saratoga*, which arrived in Japan on July 8, 1853. Many rumours had been current

on the coast of China of extensive warlike preparations by the Japanese, assisted by the Dutch, and the squadron was prepared for a hostile reception. Perry appears to have been furnished with the full powers of a United States ambassador, and to have made up his mind to stand no nonsense, to submit to no dilatory tactics or evasions, and to demand as a right, instead of soliciting as a favour, the courtesies due from one civilized nation to another.

We are told by the chronicler of the expedition that, "Furnished with these orders, and this letter splendidly engrossed and enclosed in a gold box of the value of a thousand dollars, and provided also with a variety of presents, Commodore Perry sailed upon his mission."

Perry was undoubtedly an American naval officer of the best type, determined, resourceful, energetic, and dignified. He pushed up the Bay of Yeddo with his squadron, in spite of all remonstrances. He declined to have any dealings with officers of inferior rank, but just turned them over to his flag-lieutenant and waited until the Japanese Government sent off duly qualified ministers to negotiate with him. He announced that "the squadron would not submit to be watched and guarded, after the Japanese fashion, but that all the guard-boats must withdraw. The officer, as usual, was very inquisitive. He wanted to know whether the vessels came from Boston, New York, or Washington, how many men they had, etc., etc.; but these questions he was given to understand were regarded as impertinent."

What a blow it must have been to the feelings

of the constitutionally polite and courteous little men to be told that they were "impertinent"!

After waiting some days—during which the boats of the American squadron made a flying survey of the bay, much to the consternation of the Japanese—the official came on board again and "brought information that the emperor would send down a high officer to receive the letter. No answer would be given immediately, but one would be forwarded through the Dutch or Chinese. This latter proposition the commodore treated as an insult."

Finally the Prince of Iwami was sent to receive the splendidly engrossed letter in the gold box, which was duly handed to him by the commodore, and for which he gave the following receipt:—

"The letter of the President of the United States of North America, and copy, are hereby received and delivered to the emperor. Many times it has been communicated that business relating to foreign countries cannot be transacted here in Urakawa, but in Nagasaki. Now it has been observed that the admiral (commodore), in his quality of ambassador of the President, would be insulted by it; the justice of this has been acknowledged, consequently the above-mentioned letter is hereby received, in opposition to the Japanese law.

"Because the place is not designed to treat of anything from foreigners, so neither can conference nor entertainment take place. The letter being received, you will leave here."

When this receipt was handed to the commodore he remarked that he should return again,

probably in April or May, for an answer. "With all the ships?" asked the interpreter. "Yes, and probably with more," was the reply.

He did return, and with more ships—three steam frigates, four sloops of war, and two store ships—and on March 8, 1854, a treaty was signed by which, amongst some other concessions, the two ports of Shimoda and Hakodate were opened to American shipping.

Whatever we may think of Commodore Perry's high-handed methods as an ambassador, it is undeniable that to him is due the credit of opening the long-closed door, and that his firmness, perseverance, and tenacity of purpose effected this without bloodshed, and set an example which all the Great Powers soon followed.

And now, after this brief historical sketch, I think the reader will be able to understand without difficulty the situation in Japan at the time of Lord Elgin's mission to that country in the autumn of 1858.

England was undoubtedly somewhat late in the field. The Russian War and the Indian Mutiny had distracted her attention to more important matters.

## CHAPTER VI

Lord Elgin's mission—Reception at Nagasaki—Dealing with the Cholera Devil—Yeddo—The Ambassador lands—The ship's band plays appropriate music—Politeness of Japanese officials—A Samurai plot.

ON July 31, 1858, Lord Elgin's mission sailed from Shanghai and arrived in Nagasaki harbour on August 3rd. The squadron was a very modest one, compared with that of the American ambassador. There were only the *Retribution*, the *Furious*, and the *Lee*, a gunboat. The *Furious* was a paddle-wheel steam frigate, rather smaller than the *Retribution*, and in order to afford accommodation for Lord Elgin and his staff the greater part of her main-deck guns had been landed at Hongkong and temporary cabins built on the main deck, so that the *Retribution* represented about five-sixths of the fighting power of the squadron. But we did not expect to have any fighting. Nearly four years had elapsed since the signing of the American treaty which opened to them the two ports of Shimodi and Hakodate. The pushful Americans had forced the door, it was now ajar, and the Japanese statesmen, having had time to ponder the situation, had evidently come to the conclusion that it was either impossible or not in the interest of their country

to continue any longer the policy of isolation. Be that as it may, we were certainly far more cordially received than the Americans had been, and much fewer difficulties and obstructions were offered to the negotiations which preceded the first British treaty with Japan. Possibly Lord Elgin's methods were more conciliatory and courteous than had been those of Commodore Perry; though it would be ungenerous to criticize the latter. The situation was quite different in 1854, as will be seen by the historical scraps which I gave in the last chapter, and it may well be that a somewhat rough-and-ready, shirt-sleeve diplomacy was absolutely necessary to force the door. In opening an oyster, the first wrench is everything.

Lord Elgin did not take a splendidly engrossed letter enclosed in a gold box worth a thousand dollars, but he took a present which proved to be far more useful to the awakening spirit of the Japanese. This was a steam yacht, sent by Queen Victoria as a present to the Mikado. The yacht was not much use to the Mikado himself, as this was before the great revolution and restoration. The Shogun (or Tycoon, as we called him), was the real ruler of the nation, and the seat of government was at Yeddo (Tokio), while the Mikado was practically a prisoner in his palace at Kyoto, so that he could not even see his yacht.

We were courteously received at Nagasaki, and to the best of my recollection the Japanese commissioners tried to persuade Lord Elgin to negotiate at that port; but the latter would not

consent to such an arrangement, and insisted upon pushing on to Yeddo.

Maunder says: "During the summer of 1858 Lord Elgin, having obtained a satisfactory treaty of peace from the Emperor of China, determined to go to Japan and seek to obtain from the Japanese a treaty which should give us the same commercial advantages which the Dutch had long enjoyed. Under the pretext of presenting a steam yacht to the emperor, he sailed into the harbour and anchored close to the walls of Yeddo, the capital. If the attempt was somewhat rash, its object was achieved, and he was hospitably entertained on shore for more than a week."

This, however, is scarcely correct, for Lord Elgin sought, and obtained, far more than the commercial advantages which the Dutch had long enjoyed. The commercial advantages of the latter were confined to a small settlement on the island of Desima, in Nagasaki harbour, where they were watched and kept under very close restraint and humiliating conditions. Lord Elgin opened three ports, Hakodate in the northern island of Yezo, Kanagawa (now Yokohama) in the central island of Kondo, and Nagasaki in the south island of Kiushiu; he also arranged for a British diplomatic agent to reside at Yeddo.

The steam yacht alluded to was a handsome little vessel of about 400 tons; she was also thoroughly seaworthy, and had made her own way out to China by the Cape, as this was before the days of the Suez Canal. The Japanese took kindly to her, and showed great anxiety to learn

how to work her themselves without any assistance from foreigners. The story was current (though I do not vouch for the truth of it) that at the end of a fortnight's instruction from the English engineers, the Japs said they knew all about it, and did not want any more assistance; so they got up steam, weighed the anchor, and steamed round the Bay of Yeddo, but when they wanted to stop, they were unable to do so. They showed their resource, however, by putting the helm hard over and steaming round and round in circles until the fires burnt down, the steam pressure dropped, and she stopped of herself! And then they let go the anchor.

At Nagasaki, where the squadron arrived on August 3rd, we were allowed to land on the little island of Desima, but not to pass over the bridge on to the main land, as the anti-foreign feeling was still very strong amongst the populace, though the governing classes were gradually coming round and beginning to realize that the policy of national isolation could no longer be maintained. We had to change our dollars into Japanese paper-money, and could then buy objects of Japanese art. I have now (1912) some small pieces of the beautiful egg-shell china and a bit of lacquer-work which I bought on that occasion, and it would be difficult to get anything like it in Japan now. The Japanese soon took to manufacturing for the European market, and the degradation in art, finish and lasting qualities was very great. I have visited Japan twice since—in 1881 and 1898—but I could not find anything like that egg-shell china or that piece of lacquer.

While we were at Nagasaki there was an outbreak of cholera on shore, and though there was none in any of the ships, we got the credit of bringing it, and this did not tend to make matters smoother. However, the Japanese, being a practical people, took the matter in hand, set a booby-trap for the cholera devil, caught him, took him out to sea and drowned him in deep water; and then there was no more cholera. We saw a part of the operation, though not the actual catching. One evening after dark we saw an immense procession of boats start from the town and row (or rather scull) out of the harbour. The procession must have been at least a mile long, and all the boats were in tow of one another and were illuminated with paper lanterns. In the last boat there was a huge wooden box, in which was the cholera devil that they had caught that afternoon, though we never heard what bait they used. There was a great beating of gongs, shouting and yelling, and a tremendous hullabaloo altogether. In about two hours the boats returned, without lights and in silence, and we heard afterwards that they had taken the big box about two miles out to sea, weighted it with stones, and thrown it overboard. A very simple method of stopping an outbreak of cholera!

From Nagasaki Lord Elgin sent messages to the Government at Yeddo to say he was coming, and they sent back quite polite messages to say that they hoped he would not give himself the trouble of coming so far, as any business he had to settle could be equally well conducted at Nagasaki or Shimoda. They had, however, a hard-headed

Scotsman to deal with, who intended going to Yeddo, and he went. We steamed slowly up Yeddo Bay, feeling our way with the lead, for our charts were very indifferent; the *Furious* leading and the *Retribution* following, with the yacht in tow, and the *Lee* bringing up the rear. Many boats put off to meet us, and the officials waved us back frantically; but we went steadily on until we got into 4½ fathoms of water, and then we anchored, about three miles from the town. We found some ships of the Japanese Navy lying here, and they were curious craft, not much like the ships with which these same Japs defeated the Russians in '94. They were built and rigged upon Dutch models of the sixteenth century, and any one who knows Vanderveld's sea-pieces will be able to picture to himself exactly what they were like, with their high sterns, round tops, and other characteristics of that date.

When once we were anchored and they found it was no use trying to stop us, all opposition seemed to cease, and the Japanese assumed their naturally polite and courteous manners. One day the admiral of the fleet and his staff paid us a visit, and were shown round the ship. They were dressed in their best, in splendidly embroidered garments, and the admiral's insignia of office was a magnificent gold crab, which extended right across his back from shoulder to shoulder. I took the liberty of taking a sketch of him, when his back was turned. They all had their hair done in that peculiar manner well known in the pictures of old Japan, with the

little queue, well stuck with gum, coming forward on the bald pate and ending abruptly just over the forehead. They looked very picturesque, but not very sailor-like, according to our ideas.

On the fourth day after our arrival at Yeddo Lord Elgin landed in state with his staff, and remained on shore for ten days. He was received and entertained with every courtesy, respect, and polite hospitality; and as the preparations made by the Japanese commissioners for the reception of the staff were considerably in excess of the requirement of his Lordship's very modest personal suite, he most kindly and thoughtfully invited several officers from each of the ships to join his suite; and as these batches of officers relieved each other every two days, almost all the wardroom officers of the squadron had the opportunity of getting a glimpse of old Japan in its feudal state, before it was Bowdlerized. Alas! this opportunity did not come down to the midshipmen, and it was many years afterwards that I first put my foot on shore at Yeddo. Indeed, I am not quite sure that it would have been wise to give the midshipmen a run on shore in Japan at this early date, for we certainly *were* rather fond of a lark, and not always very discreet as to what particular form the lark took, nor at whose expense we indulged in it. The Samurai all wore two sharp swords and were said to be very touchy upon points of etiquette, concerning which we should have been ignorant.

The landing of Lord Elgin at Yeddo was quite an imposing function. I have already alluded

in a former chapter to the part which the *Retribution's* amateur brass band took on that occasion, and how much it added to the general effect of the arrival of the first British ambassador at the capital of Japan. When all was ready on shore for his reception, we formed an imposing procession of boats—not quite so big a one as that which interred the cholera devil at Nagasaki, but still a very respectable one—and I had the honour of leading it in one of our paddle-box boats, in which a temporary platform had been rigged up for the band to stand upon, and as the sea was quite calm none of them rolled overboard. I do not remember what airs they played, but I do remember they played with great vigour and there was plenty of big drum. We had a long row (no steam launches) in a very hot sun, and then we had to go up a narrow creek to the landing-place; but alas! long before we got to the latter, all our boats stuck in the mud. The water was too shallow for any of our big sea-going boats to get near the landing-place, and the ambassador and all his staff had to be transferred to the little flat-bottomed native boats and sculled on shore in them, which rather spoilt the effect; and at the supreme moment of first putting his foot on Japanese soil, his Lordship could only have heard the band in the extreme distance, if indeed he could hear it at all, though they blew for all they were worth.

After the landing of the ambassador we who were left on board the ships had rather a slow time. It was most tantalizing to be in sight of a beautiful-looking country and not allowed to

land and explore it, though no doubt the prohibition was wise, as the popular feeling was still very anti-foreign. The ruling classes were coming round, but the populace were slower to move, and it took some years to overcome their prejudice.

The authorities were very civil and polite, and they used occasionally to send off presents of fowls, eggs, fruit and sweatmeats to the officers; but we were not allowed to send our stewards on shore marketing, so we could not get what we wanted. We asked if we could be supplied with water, and they said "Oh yes, certainly," and sent off a boat with two tubs not so big as our own grog-tub, and no pump. However, we got the water out and then asked for more, and then another boat of the same size came off, and then two or three more; but it really was not worth while trying to water a ship in that fashion, so we gave it up and asked if they could supply us with coal.

"Oh yes, certainly," and next day a boat came off with half a dozen straw bundles, neatly tied up with grass cording, and on being opened they were found to contain about half a hundredweight of coal each. After coaling ship in this remarkably clean manner for two days, so as not to hurt the feelings of our hosts, we told them we had enough; which was not strictly true. One day a little live pig came off as a present to the officers, and he was tied up in straw and neatly corded like the coal; but he did not seem to like these cleanly methods at all—none of his family do—and he made a great fuss about it, until the cook got hold of him.

The weather was very hot in the Gulf of Yeddo in the month of August, and we used to bathe twice a day and stay in a long time. We midshipmen were allowed to go away sailing and rowing in the jollyboat, on condition that we did not land. We tried to fish, but caught nothing; we were, however, able to buy fish from the native boats; and I see by my private journal that on one occasion we got two big wash-deck buckets full of fish for three empty beer-bottles, and on another a basket of fish for one gilt navy button; but this was before the Japanese had become a commercial people. The fishermen in the boats were sometimes perfectly naked, and we envied them.

We had to wait for nearly a fortnight while the ambassador was on shore negotiating his treaty, and during this time one of our men died of heat apoplexy, but as we were not allowed to bury him on shore we had to sew him up in his hammock with a couple of shot (the usual sea burial), take him out about a mile and drop him overboard. The whole of the Gulf of Yeddo is, however, very shoal, and two or three days afterwards the fishermen pulled him up in their nets and brought him on board; so we asked them to put him back again and leave him alone, which they did. I suppose we ought to have buoyed him with the usual "wreck" buoy; and perhaps the fishermen did so afterwards, to save themselves trouble.

On leaving Yeddo it was the ambassador's intention to go to Hakodate, in the north island; but the wind was foul and we had not coal enough in

our bunkers, even with the additional supply that we got in the straw bundles; so we bore up and sailed away for Nagasaki and Shanghai. But before saying farewell to Japan, I must tell a good story, though it is entirely out of chronological order.

When I was second in command of the British China Squadron in 1897, a portion of the squadron under my orders was lying at Yokoshika. We had received a great deal of civility and hospitality from the Japanese officials, and one day I gave a luncheon party on board my flagship—the *Grafton*. Amongst my guests were Count Saigo, the Minister of Marine, and Admiral Ito, who had commanded the Japanese squadron which defeated the Chinese at the battle of the Yalu, and was hence known as "Yalu Ito," to distinguish him from numerous other Itos. Captain (now Admiral Sir Reginald) Custance, who commanded the *Barfleur*, was also one of the party, and during lunch he told the following story: When he was a midshipman on board the 50-gun frigate *Euryalus*, flagship of Admiral Kuper, they were lying off Kagoshima in August, 1863, and at this time the relations between Great Britain and Japan were extremely strained—so strained, in fact, that they were just on the point of breaking. Under these circumstances a party of forty of the younger Samurai came on board the *Euryalus* one afternoon to pay a friendly visit and ask to be allowed to walk round the decks and see the ship. They had, however, formed an ambitious and desperate plot, that at a given signal from their leader they were to draw their swords, cut down all the officers, and having

so done they were firmly convinced that they would have no difficulty in capturing the ship, as the men would all surrender in panic. But it so happened that, at the time the party came on board and appeared upon the quarter-deck of the *Euryalus*, there was a squad of marines drilling, with their arms, on the other side of the quarter-deck; so the Samurai immediately came to the conclusion that the plot had been discovered, or at any rate suspected. They therefore bowed politely, walked round the ship, and went on shore again.

While Captain Custance was telling this story it was noticed that two of our guests were convulsed with laughter. The story was certainly an amusing one, and everybody was more or less laughing at the quaint idea; but there did not appear to be any particular reason why two of our Japanese friends should be literally in fits of laughter, until the story was finished, when Count Saigo and Admiral Ito owned up to having been members of the party of young patriots who proposed to cut down the officers of the *Euryalus* and capture the ship thirty-four years ago; and they further told us that there was a belief prevalent in Japan at this time that no European soldier could bend his knees, and that if he were knocked down he could not get up again until some one picked him up and stood him on his feet once more—like the little wooden figures in a child's Noah's ark.

# CHAPTER VII

We escort Lord Elgin to Hankow—Shelling the forts—The Taiping code of Christianity—Pheasant-shooting—Christmas Day at Woohoo—Hongkong—We lose our captain and first lieutenant—Singapore and an American mutiny.

OUR next cruise in the *Retribution* was up the Yangtze-kiang, still as escort to Lord Elgin; who, having opened to British trade (by treaty) the great city of Hankow, six hundred miles from the sea, must needs go and prove it. But as Nanking and a large tract of country between Hankow and the sea was at this time in the hands of the Taiping rebels, whose sentiments towards foreigners were at least doubtful, our squadron was strengthened by the addition of the 17-gun corvette *Cruiser* and another gunboat, the *Dove*; so that it now consisted of *Retribution*, *Furious*, *Cruiser*, *Lee*, and *Dove*, and with this respectable force we started on November 8, 1858, to make our way up to Hankow. But it was not a very easy matter to get to Hankow with ships of comparatively heavy draught, for we had no reliable charts of the river. There had been a rough survey of it made by the British Squadron which accompanied Sir Henry Pottinger to Nanking and bombarded that city in 1842, but during the sixteen years which had elapsed since this survey was made

the great tidal estuary of the river had completely changed. The sand-banks had shifted, and in places where five or six fathoms were marked on our chart we found banks which dried at low tide; and there were of course no buoys or beacons; so that for the first ten days of our journey we spent a good deal of our time aground on sand-banks while the two gunboats and our own row-boats were searching for the channel. I find on referring to my log that either the *Furious* or the *Retribution* was aground every day, and sometimes twice a day. We took ten days to cover one hundred miles of the estuary and then we got to the gates of the river, as it is called, where the river narrows and the ocean tides cease; but even then our troubles were not over, for on the next day the *Furious* ran on a rock at the narrow by Silver Island, just below the great walled city of Chin-kiang-fu, and remained aground for two days. We had to take out a good deal of her coal, her chain cables, and other weights, and then put them back again as soon as she was afloat. She was none the worse for it, although she was going nine knots under sail and steam when she ran on the rock. The bottoms of our ships of this date were not made of biscuit-tins, and they could stand a fair amount of bumping on rocks and sand-banks.

As soon as the *Furious* was ready again we went on up the river, and next day, having arrived just below Nanking, which was in possession of the Taipings, who were in rebellion against the Imperial Government, we were uncertain as to whether they would allow us to pass peaceably on our way or try to stop us; so a council of war was

held on board the *Retribution*, and as a result the *Lee* gunboat was sent ahead with a flag of truce and with directions to say that we had no quarrel with the Taipings and had no wish to interfere in their family affairs, but that we intended to pass up the river to Hankow and should not molest them if they did not fire at us. The order of sailing was changed, and the *Retribution* took the lead, as being the most powerful ship, and Captain Barker, being senior to Captain Osborn of the *Furious*, of course had the right to lead if there was any chance of a fight. The old boy was really very ill, and had been unwell for some time; but he was not the man to be ill if there was any fighting to be done, so he was helped up on to the bridge and sat there in a chair. We then beat to quarters and loaded the guns and watched anxiously to see what would happen; but we had not long to wait, for the first fort fired on the *Lee* with her flag of truce, so she turned about and came back and the squadron proceeded. The forts, as we came abreast of them, opened a hot fire, though it was rather high, and riddled our funnels and paddle-boxes and cut up the rigging a good deal. We shelled the forts on both sides of the river in passing, and then anchored above the town for the night, as the light was failing. We only had three casualties in the *Retribution*, one killed and two wounded, and the other ships had none. It was decided to finish the job next morning, as the forts had not all been silenced and it was necessary to give the Taipings a lesson; so at the first streak of dawn the squadron dropped down and bombarded all the forts until they were com-

pletely silenced, and then we went on our way up the river.

Although it is not strictly in chronological order, I may perhaps give here a document which contains an apology from the Taipings and also a declaration of a sort of bastard Christianity which they had manufactured for themselves out of various elements, and which they evidently hoped would commend them to our friendship as brother Christians. The document was handed to Captain Barker on our return down the river about a month later, and Mr. Wade, our interpreter, made the following translation of it :—

"Communication from Lieu, true and loyal supporter of the Royal House and assistant controller adjutant-general of the household troops, and supporter of the Celestial Institute, to Captain Barker, senior naval officer of the English Squadron.

COMMUNICATION.

"Jesus the great elder brother, being the first-born Son of God the Heavenly Father, our true and only holy lord, the Celestial Prince, is the second Son of God the Heavenly Father. The great elder brother the Saviour having returned to heaven, the true doctrine was disseminated for more than eighteen centuries before it reached China: hence our lord the Celestial Prince received anew in person the true commission of God the Heavenly Father, and in accordance with the will of Jesus the great elder brother he descended on earth to save the world, and by the promulgation of the gospel to lead all nations to

unite in following the true doctrine that they may together attain to paradise. Now you of the English nation who are in the habit of worshipping Jesus the great elder brother are the sons and daughters of God the Heavenly Father, and the brothers and sisters of Jesus the great elder brother, and also the brothers and sisters of our true and holy Lord of the same family with ourselves.

"Formerly when you passed the Celestial capital (Nanking) the officers in command of the Pass having entered the city on public business, the soldiers in charge of the forts, being ignorant and uninformed, unadvisedly opened fire and committed a breach of the family proprieties. The true and holy Lord has already forwarded an announcement to you, which I imagine has by this time reached you. At our interview yesterday at Woohoo I made a statement to the same effect. I hope when you return you will stop at the central Pass (Nanking), when the elder brother will send officers to meet you, and I trust you will not reject their advances.

"Further I entreat you in the future, when you have occasion to pass, to forward a despatch previously, or to send a boat in advance with a letter, in order to avoid the occurrence of any misunderstanding, which is what I earnestly desire.

"The Great Tranquillity, Taiping, Celestial Dynasty, 8th year, 11th month, 16th day."

From which it appears that there is nothing which makes people civil so effectively as giving them a good hammering.

These Taiping rebels, who were finally subju-

gated by the heroic Gordon, were ruthlessly and abominably cruel, even for Chinamen. They devastated wide tracts of country, murdering and exterminating men, women, and children—everybody who would not join them in their rebellion against the Government. Amongst numerous other acts of vandalism, they utterly destroyed the famous porcelain pagoda at Nanking, one of the seven wonders of the world. The fertile valley of the Yangtze for many miles above Nanking was a depopulated waste. Burnt villages and uncultivated paddy-fields on both banks of the great river marked the track of this devastating horde of pseudo-Christian fanatics, who had distorted the teaching of the Christian missionaries into the blasphemous parody given above.

Our casualties at Nanking were very small, considering the number of times the ship was struck. I do not know if the Chinese thought our funnels were a vital spot and aimed specially at them; but if they did they made excellent practice, for the funnels were riddled, but of course were easily patched so as to be as good as ever. We had one marine killed. The yeoman of the signals had his right leg shot off; he was standing close to the captain, who was sitting in a chair on the bridge. And my little messmate, G. Birch, had his right arm shot off. I used to take my turn to sit up with him while he wanted nursing, and one of the things he complained of was that the nails of his right hand—which was then at the bottom of the Yangtze—were digging into the flesh of the palm of the hand and giving him great pain.

After we had passed Nanking and were proceeding up the river we were fired at on two or three occasions by isolated parties of Taipings from small mud forts on the banks ; but one or two well-placed shell from the upper-deck guns always sent these warriors scuttling up-country. We got aground again several times in the *Retribution*, and as it became evident that with our heavy draught of water we should most probably delay the other ships in getting to Hankow, and as also the only real danger-point was passed, it was decided to leave us behind at Woohoo, about 50 miles above Nanking, while the ambassador went on with the smaller ships to Hankow, 300 miles farther up. So we let go our anchor and gave them three hearty cheers as the *Furious* and *Cruiser* with the two gunboats went on up the river. After they had gone, however, we moved cautiously up a little higher, to a better anchorage off a small town called Keuhein, and there we lay for twenty-six days ; but as we found that the river was steadily falling, and not likely to rise again before the spring, we dropped down again to Woohoo, where we lay for another week, when, to our surprise, one fine morning the two gunboats appeared without the *Furious* and *Cruiser* and with the ambassador's flag flying from the mast-head of the *Lee*. It appeared that the falling river had caught the two big ships in a trap, and there was little prospect of their being able to get down the river until the spring freshets, and we were now only in December! So as Lord Elgin had finished his business at Hankow, and did not want to remain there for

another three or four months, he got into the *Lee* and came down with the two gunboats, and we immediately got under way in the *Retribution* and saw him safely past Nanking; though we were very nearly nipped ourselves, but just managed to bump the old ship over a sand-bar with a foot less water on it than we were drawing.

The country around Keuhein—on both banks of the river—had been laid waste and almost depopulated by the Taipings, so that it was nearly impossible to get supplies of fresh provisions of any sort at any price, and we might just as well have been at sea in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, for our fare was the regular sea allowance of salt beef and salt pork on alternate days. On one occasion the paymaster did manage to purchase enough fresh pork for the ship's company; but a few days afterwards we saw four men brought down to the bank of the river and decapitated. Their heads were taken away, but their bodies were left there, and presently a herd of swine came down and fed upon them; and after that we did not eat any more fresh pork. The officers were not quite so badly off as the ship's company, as there were pheasants to be shot, and we generally managed to get a few—almost every day. We were ten in the midshipmen's berth, and I was the only one who had a gun, and that gun was very nearly worth its weight in gold. Many a good supper it provided for our mess, after we had dined at midday on salt beef. I had taken the precaution to lay in a fairly good stock of powder and shot, copper caps and wads (how funny this will sound to the

modern shooter) at Shanghai, and lucky it was I had done so. We midshipmen had school in the forenoon; but a kind and considerate first lieutenant let me go on shore almost every afternoon, and I was also pretty sure of two or three of my messmates to act as beaters. It was worth their while to do so, and to carry the birds too and not drop any of them. The covers were thick and the birds were hard to get up—we had no dogs, and all runners were lost; but let no one imagine that if I saw a runner which had not been fired at I waited for him to get up. Unsportsmanlike to shoot a pheasant on the ground? Gammon! Wait, my dear reader, until you are in the position of a hungry midshipman shooting for his supper, and then perhaps you will know the real meaning of the word "sport," the very essence of which is pot-hunting. Our remote ancestors who went out with their bows and arrows to kill game and bring home food for their starving families have a far better claim to the proud title of "sportsman" than one of us who stands outside a cover and shows his skill (or the other thing) while pheasants are being driven over his head by an army of beaters. I am not "crabbing" modern pheasant-shooting: that would be inconsistent, as I do it myself when I get the chance, and I think it is a very entertaining amusement which demands considerable skill and coolness; but I cannot admit that it is entitled to be called "sport," whatever else you like to call it.

When we left Shanghai to go up the Yangtze we did not expect to be so long away from all

sources of supply, and we had not filled up with stores and provisions. Thus we ran out of rum and sugar. It was impossible to buy sugar at either Kuihein or Woohoo. Tea without sugar was not so bad, but the unsweetened cocoa was very nasty. As to rum, the paymaster was able to buy a Chinese spirit known as samshu, distilled from rice. It smelt horribly, and I have seen the men holding their noses while they drank it. I cannot say that I ever tasted it; the smell was enough for me.

We spent our Christmas Day up the river waiting for the ambassador, and the men had to make merry on samshu instead of rum; but they were very good-humoured about it, as they knew it was unavoidable. It is the custom of the navy for the men to decorate their messes on Christmas Day with paper flowers, figures, models, inscriptions, poetry, and all sorts of quaint devices; and then when all is ready, at about a quarter to twelve, there is a procession of the captain and officers round the mess deck, the band playing "The Roast Beef of Old England."

There was none of the roast beef of old England on this occasion, nor even the roast pork of Woohoo, and as there was no sugar, the plum-duffs must have been rather poor; yet the men all seemed happy, and a good many of them were quite happy—*i.e.*, drunk—before night. The mystery of how and when enough liquor to make most of the men drunk got on board a ship in time for Christmas Day, and where it was stowed in the meantime, was one which always puzzled the most zealous and astute master-at-

arms and all his ship's corporals. I do not know if it has been solved since I came ashore, or whether the practice has been abandoned and non-alcoholic beverages smuggled on board instead, just to keep up appearances.

I remember amongst the decorations the following, as a transparency in various coloured letters, illuminated from behind with tallow candles: "Naval Obituary: Departed this life, of a galloping consumption, Admiral Raw Rum. Promotion: Captain Sam Shaw [samshu] to be admiral, vice Raw Rum, deceased."

Directly Lord Elgin arrived at Woohoo with the two gunboats, as I have before mentioned, we started off down the river for Shanghai, and made rapid progress. We were not fired at by the Taipings at Nanking, and we were extremely lucky in not getting aground once—though the water had fallen considerably—until we were within twenty miles of Shanghai, when up we went on a sand-bank on the last day of the old year, and stuck there for two days. Lord Elgin went on and arrived with the two gunboats, all that was left of his squadron; but he had carried out his mission and done all that he intended to do, and he also had the satisfaction of seeing all his escort safe back at Shanghai before he left, for there had been heavy rains up-country, which caused a sudden and abnormal rise of the great river and enabled the *Furious* and *Cruiser* to extricate themselves from their trap and arrive at Shanghai a few days after us, just as we were on the point of dispatching the *Lee* and *Dove* loaded up with stores and provisions for them.

I find in my journal that "on January 11th Lord Elgin called on the Chinese Imperial Commissioners; we landed all our marines as a guard of honour; we also sent the band, and there was a grand procession of palanquins, etc. Two of the guard of honour were carried down to the boat dead drunk. The captain was in a great rage about it, and flogged them both next morning."

Then on the 19th we sailed for Hongkong, and did not visit North China again; and on our arrival our old captain, who had been ill for some time, finally decided that he must give up the command of the ship and go home to England by the next mail steamer. He was a fine seaman, quite one of the old school; and although he was hasty in temper and given to getting into a tantrum about small things, he was generous and forgiving and never bore malice, and we were all very sorry to lose him.

Referring to my journal again, I find that "we rowed him on board the mail steamer with a boat's crew of officers. I rowed the bow oar, and had the honour of hoisting his pennant for the last time. He tried to make a speech to the ship's company on leaving the ship, but completely broke down and cried like a child." The old boy was quite worn out, and died soon after he got home.

Captain Peter Cracroft, of the *Niger*, took temporary command of the *Retribution*, and brought his wife with him. She was a good deal older than him, and she lived on board all the time we were in harbour. She tried to be very kind and friendly to the officers, but was a great

nuisance—as women always are on board a ship of war, except when they come off for an afternoon dance or entertainment.

We also lost our courteous and popular first lieutenant at this time. He was made acting-commander of the *Camilla*, a fine 16-gun brig, and he took with him—as was the custom at this time—his boat's crew, consisting of five of the smartest young A.B.'s in the ship. He had one cruise in the *Camilla* and then returned to Hongkong, where he found he was promoted, and went home; but the five A.B.'s remained in the *Camilla*, which soon afterwards sailed for Japan, and was never heard of again, nor was a stick or a rag of her ever found. She had very taunt masts and a great spread of canvas, and probably capsized, like a good many other brigs, some of which I mentioned in an earlier chapter.

One night while we were lying at Hongkong we saw a great blaze on shore, and, as it was close to the water's edge, I was sent away in the pinnace with our little hand fire-engine and a party of men to help to put it out. We squirted away at it for about a quarter of an hour, with no more effect than if one of our tars had expectorated his 'baccy-juice at it; and it became obvious that if the fire was to be prevented from spreading an adjacent house must be demolished, and, as there was no dynamite in those days, we were asked to pull the house down, instead of squirting at the fire. Just the very job the sailors liked. "Down 'ouse!" What a lark!

The pinnace's cablet, a 3½-inch cable-laid rope, was brought on shore; the end rove in through

one window on the second floor and out through another, and a bowline-knot put on it. Then we manned the hawser and got about fifty Chinamen to clap on. "One, two, three, haul!" and out came the side of the house and down came the roof, and the whole jerry-built structure collapsed in a cloud of dust. The fire was stopped from spreading in that direction, but it was not finally extinguished till next day.

In April the *Retribution* went down to Singapore, hoisted the broad pennant of Commodore Harry Edgell, and became flagship on the East India station, which was not then a separate command, as it is now, but was a sort of adjunct to the China station. A very unpractical and inconvenient arrangement, as the commodore, though much nearer home, had to send his reports through the admiral in China and also get his orders through him, and there was of course no telegraphic communication.

We had to dismount two of our main deck guns and build cabins for a commander and a secretary, who came with the commodore. The secretary, J. S. Moore, was a first-rate fellow and a keen sportsman; but the commander rubbed everybody the wrong way, and we hated him.

While we were lying at Singapore we witnessed a mutiny on board an American merchant ship. She was lying close to us, and was one of those splendid well-kept clippers that were seen in all parts of the world prior to the American civil war. About five o'clock one afternoon we heard a great row going on on board the *Neptune's Car*. The crew all came aft on the quarter-deck and

apparently began arguing with the three mates, who were standing at the poop rails. The altercation was obviously a very angry one, and then suddenly some of the crew rushed to the fife rails, pulled out the iron belaying-pins, and let fly at the three officers on the poop, who dodged as best they could; but while this was going on, something was happening which no one on board the *Neptune's Car* could see, though we could. A boat rowed off from the shore, came under the stern of the ship, and a little man swarmed up the rope-ladder which was hanging over the stern and suddenly appeared at the break of the poop with something in his hand. He was a very small, boyish-looking little fellow, but the effect of his appearance was magical. The whole crew turned and fled like a flock of sheep before a dog. They fled on to the forecastle and the little man after them. They swarmed out on the bowsprit, out on to the jib-boom, out on to the flying jib-boom, and then they began dropping off the end of the flying jib-boom into the water like dead flies. One of our cutters happened to be manned alongside, and she was immediately sent away and picked up some of them and brought them on board the *Retribution*, where they were lent clothes while their own were drying, and then sent on shore and handed over to the United States consul. All the Yankee swank was taken out of them and they were as tame as kitchen cats; and when we asked them what on earth induced them to go overboard in a sharky place like Singapore, all we could get out of them was—"That captain of ours is a snotty little cuss."

# CHAPTER VIII

Trincomalee—Elephant - hunting in Ceylon—Madras—The Admiral of the Catamarans—Calcutta—On the Hoogli—The Indian Navy—Laying the first submarine cable to India—Bombay—Cotton fire—Smuggling—Home again.

AS soon as our extra cabins were ready we shipped our commodore and his staff, hoisted his broad pennant and his twelve-oared green barge on board, and sailed for Trincomalee, which was then the headquarters of the East India Squadron. Colombo breakwater had not yet been built, and Trincomalee was the only good harbour in Ceylon; in fact, it was the best on the station. There was an Admiralty House there for the commodore and a very efficient little dockyard, which has since been closed and the stores sold, in order to save money and admit of a reduction in the navy estimates. This was one of Lord Fisher's famous "reforms," which may possibly be reversed in the near future, as it has been discovered that Great Britain has still some interest in India and Ceylon.

In 1859 Trincomalee was a sailor's paradise. There was a small but pleasant English colony, a regiment, a battery of artillery, some engineers, and a small sprinkling of civilians and ladies. We had dances, cricket, regattas, horse-racing, picnics,

and there was very good shooting—from snipe to elephants. What more could any man—or midshipman—want? I shot an elephant myself; but of this anon. The officer commanding the Royal Engineers kept three horses, and they were all at the disposal of the midshipmen of the *Retribution* whenever they liked to go and order them to be saddled. Did anybody ever hear of any other man who lent his horses to midshipmen whenever they wanted to go for a gallop? If so, I should like to know his name, to be put alongside of that of Captain Kelsall, R.E., who I certainly think was the most good-natured man I ever met. Many a good gallop I had on his horses, and we kept them in good exercise. One of them was a notorious bolter. Nobody could hold him. He used to grip the bit firmly between his teeth, and then you might as well haul away at a rope belayed round a towing bollard as pull at the reins. The only thing was to keep him straight until he was tired.

The first shooting expedition that I took part in in Ceylon was to Tamblegan, where there is a famous snipe marsh; but we were not after such small fry as snipe. Elephants or elk were the object of our ambition, though we did not get either on that occasion. We engaged as our chief shikari a renowned hunter known as "Shooting Abraham," a Mahomedan, who we were told would be sure to find game for us. Our party consisted of Moore, the secretary, Teddy Hunter, one of the lieutenants, Bullen, the paymaster, and myself. Bullen was on many occasions my shooting chum, and a right good companion he was. He has long since joined the great majority. This expedition

was blank. We had come to what we were told was the usual understanding when out after elephants—viz., not to fire at small game for fear of frightening any elephants which might be within sound of the shot, and only to fire at an elk if we got a really good close shot at one, or a bear or leopard in self-defence. We were out for five days and saw neither elephants nor elks, and came to the conclusion that the next time we went shooting we would have no understanding and just fire at everything we saw. We generally slept in the rest-houses which are dotted along the roads in Ceylon; but one night, as we were nowhere near a rest-house, we slept in the open under a camphor-tree. There was a village about a mile off and a tank or large pond about 200 yards off. This was said to be full of alligators. I don't know why we selected this spot, but we did, and after supper we all four lay down in a row and pulled a rug over us, as the nights were chilly; but just before we lay down, one of the villagers told us that a few nights before an alligator had taken a child much farther from the tank than we were then encamped, so no doubt we had alligators in our dreams; and in the middle of the night we all jumped up in a panic, seized our rifles, and by great good luck did not shoot one another. A company of monkeys had come down out of the camphor-tree and run right across us; so there really was some excuse for us, though it would be hard to say which was most scared—the hunters or the monkeys. Anyhow, the monkeys made the most noise.

We were all four of us quite strange to jungle shooting, and we started upon this expedition with

a somewhat exaggerated idea of the danger from snakes, which abound in Ceylon. When we were in long grass we walked delicately—like Agag—picking our steps and looking out sharp for cobras; yet strange to say, on this our first expedition not one of us saw a snake of any sort.

I went on several other shooting trips in Ceylon, but with small success until the last one of all, when I "bagged" an elephant—the heaviest bag I ever made. On this occasion the party was only two—Bullen and myself. We rode twenty-five miles, to a place called Kandelli, a district said to be swarming with elephants, and there certainly were tracks of them in all directions; yet we hunted—sometimes by day and sometimes by night—for four days before we sighted wild elephants for the first time in our lives. Tracking is rather exciting work, especially when the spoor is fresh and you do not know the moment you may come suddenly upon a herd of elephants in quite thick jungle. Our trackers would never follow the spoor of a single elephant. Nothing would induce them to do so. A single elephant, like a single man, is always a rogue. He has been unable to get a mate, and has been turned out of the herd and put in coventry, which spoils his temper; and it is said that a rogue elephant will attack men gratuitously, without having been wounded or even fired at, but just out of sheer devilment and ill-humour. I never saw a rogue—I mean a rogue elephant; but our commodore and the commandant of the fort, who went on a shooting trip together about this time, came suddenly across a rogue, and were advised by their trackers to get

up trees as quickly as possible, which they did, and were kept there for two or three hours by the rogue, who came seeking them. This sort of hunting with "the bear behind" must be very unpleasant. It never happened to me. But to return to my own story. As I have already said, Bullen and I followed elephant tracks for the best part of four days without getting a sight of one; so, in desperation, we decided on the last day that we would sleep in the afternoon, get some supper, hunt all night, and return to Trincomalee next day, where we were due on board the ship that evening. So off we started just after sundown and followed the freshest spoor we could find. It was a fine, moonlight night, and about two o'clock in the morning we emerged from a rather thick jungle on to an open plain, and there, to our great joy, we saw, about a hundred yards off, a herd of some fifty elephants, not travelling, but standing quite still. We each had two gun-bearers with a rifle each, besides the one we had in our hands, for this was in the days of muzzle-loaders, and there was no time to reload if one was charged by a wounded beast. My battery consisted of a rifle I had borrowed from Kelsall, a ship's rifle, and a short Marine Artillery carbine, borrowed from my marine servant; and Bullen's battery was much of the same nature. We first lay down flat and consulted in whispers. The natives were greatly excited, and we had much difficulty in making them keep their mouths shut. Then we advanced cautiously, crawling on our hands and knees. We felt rather bold, as we had been told that a herd never charged—only rogues

did that; so we crawled along until we got within about thirty yards of the elephants, still unobserved. At this distance we thought we were near enough to open fire, which we did, and six rifle shots rang out on the still night air. We expected to see one or two of them drop; but there was no result, except that they made all sorts of strange noises, and set off at a swinging trot, with their trunks up in the air, snorting, grunting, and squealing; and away we went after them, loading as we ran as best we could—not easy with a muzzle-loader. The herd kept along the plain, parallel with the edge of the jungle out of which we had come, for a mile or more, and then they turned into the jungle.

I was young and active in those days, and having out-run all the others, I caught up to the herd just as they were turning into the jungle. I looked round, but there was nobody in sight. The moon was obscured, and it was very dark, and at the place which the elephants had selected for turning into the jungle there was a sharp dividing line between the plain and wood, the latter being on the side of a very steep hill, which rose abruptly from the former, and up this the whole herd went in a panic, crashing and smashing and breaking down quite good-sized trees. *If* they had only realized their strength and the size of the little animal who was chasing them, they would have turned and trampled me to pulp in less than a minute; but they didn't, and when I caught up to them they all seemed to be trying to get through the same doorway, like a panic-stricken crowd escaping from a burning theatre, and I got

so close to them that I could easily have caught hold of their tails, which were hanging down like bell-ropes; but it was no use ringing that sort of bell nor firing at that part of an elephant. I wanted heads and it was all tails, until suddenly, by an extraordinary piece of good luck, one of the rear guard, who had been trying to squeeze his way through the gap made by the leaders, got pushed back by his mates and stood facing me about three or four yards off. All I could see in the darkness were two great ears; but, presuming there must be a head between them, I let fly, and down he came with a crash, and never gave another kick. I put another bullet into his head to make sure he was not shamming, and when Bullen and the trackers came up they found me dancing a hornpipe on top of him.

If the gods from their star-lit gallery were watching me while I was chasing the elephants, I must have looked rather like a fox-terrier chasing a flock of frightened sheep. When Bullen and I were consulting in whispers—just before we advanced into the plain—as to what we would do in case we were charged by a wounded elephant, we decided that we would make for the jungle which covered the side of the steep ridge down which we had come before sighting the elephants; as we thought, in our ignorance, that nothing less active than a monkey would be able to follow us up such a rough and precipitous place; yet this was the very place up which the elephants made their final escape when they found that I was gaining on them, and up which they made their way as fast or

faster than we could have done ourselves. So little did we know of the climbing powers of elephants in their wild state. Alas! my elephant had no tusks. Very few of the Ceylon elephants have any, only small tushes, so that it seems to be rather wanton destruction to shoot them; though I may explain that fifty years ago the wild elephants in Ceylon were regarded rather as vermin, to be exterminated, as they used to do immense damage to the coffee plantations, and it was considered meritorious to shoot them. There was a major in the Ceylon Rifles—I think his name was Hook—who was said to have shot eight hundred, a good percentage of them being rogues, though very few tuskers. Since those days the elephants in Ceylon have been protected by very strict laws. Probably they don't get at the tea, which has now taken the place of coffee.

This was my last shooting expedition in Ceylon, and shortly afterwards we took a cruise to Madras, and a most unpleasant place it was to lie at: no harbour, just an open roadstead, a heavy ground swell, the ship rolling so that all lower-deck scuttles had to be kept closed, and no possibility of landing except in one of the regular surf-boats manned by a dozen natives, or upon a catamaran—*i.e.*, three logs of wood lashed together and tapered off at the ends, upon which the native kneels and propels himself with a paddle. Needless to say he is almost as much in the water as out of it, especially in going through the surf.

During our stay in Madras Roads the commodore received a formal visit from the Admiral of the

Catamarans, a venerable old native who had greatly distinguished himself in saving lives during a cyclone and series of shipwrecks, which occurred some years before our visit.

The story was that a sudden storm arose without any warning, and that fourteen ships which were lying in Madras Roads all dragged their anchors and were wrecked, several hundred yards from dry land. The sea was much too heavy for any of the surf-boats to live in, and there was a good chance that all the crews would have been drowned had not a number of catamarans put off to the rescue and landed a good many, including some women and children, who must have been in sorry plight by the time they got ashore through the surf on a catamaran. At any rate, a large number of lives were saved, and the gallant old native, who now bore the proud title of Admiral of the Catamarans, was the man who, by his exhortations and example, had been mainly instrumental in organizing the rescue. I give this story from memory and cannot vouch for the accuracy of the details, though I think I am right with regard to the main features of it. At any rate, the admiral's visit was not unexpected; we were looking out for him, and one afternoon the signalman of the watch reported him as coming off through the surf in (or rather on) his catamaran, with his flag flying in the bow. And there he was sure enough, arrayed in an admiral's full-dress uniform, sitting, or rather kneeling, on the fore part of the logs whilst two stalwart paddlers on the after part brought him alongside. It had been the

immemorial custom for some years past, whenever a flag officer, admiral, or commodore visited Madras, to present this old gentleman with some article of naval uniform, if it could be spared; and no doubt his uniform required pretty frequent renewal, as salt water is bad for gold lace. He was duly received on the quarter-deck by our commodore and an admiral's guard of honour: but I noticed that the latter had some difficulty in keeping their countenances; in fact we all had, for it was certainly an unusual sight to see an elderly brown gentleman appearing on the quarter-deck, arrayed in an admiral's full-dress coat, epaulettes, full-dress sword-belt, cocked hat and no trousers of any sort; but a pair of skinny brown legs with white patches of incrusted salt upon the knees and heels. He was taken down to the commodore's cabin and given refreshment; and as he represented that his cocked hat was getting rather the worse for wear and the salt water, the commodore gave him a new one, or rather an old one; and with that and a bottle of rum he went ashore quite happy.

There was a Madras story about the landing of a certain Governor and his wife, which I also give from memory. It appears that the lady was of a somewhat prudish disposition, and having heard from a friend that she would have to land in a surf-boat, the crew of which would have no clothing save the orthodox loin-clout, she had prepared twelve suits of light clothing, consisting of a short neat jumper bound with blue braid and a pair of short pants down to the knee. These had been duly sent on beforehand,

and when the Governor's surf-boat appeared alongside the mail steamer, to land his Excellency and his party, the crew looked not only picturesque, but quite decent in their new garments and very proud of themselves. They then rowed in through the half-mile of smooth water which separates the anchorage from the surf; but just before they got to the first line of breakers they laid on their oars and proceeded to divest themselves of their beautiful new garments. His Excellency remonstrated; all the staff remonstrated; even the native coxswain remonstrated; but it was quite useless. The thrifty oarsmen were not going to risk spoiling their new clothes by getting them wet with salt water; so they took them off, folded them up neatly, and stowed them under the thwarts, and then, lo and behold, they had nothing on at all! The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley.

About this time the old *Retribution* began to show unmistakable signs of senile decay. She leaked at sea when carrying sail. The mizen mast was found to be rotten at the partners, and we had to fish it. The rudder struck work altogether: it had shown signs of weakness for some time, and we had unshipped and landed it at the Falkland Islands, and hooped the head with iron bands; but the constant rolling in the roadstead at Madras had set the head working again, and on close examination it was found to be little better than a bundle of shakes held together with numerous hoops. This was serious, as the rudder only went over a little way when the tiller was put hard over. So we bought a

huge baulk of teak, too heavy to hoist in, towed it down to Trincomalee, and made a new rudder; and a very good job old "Chips" made of it, for it went into its place without a struggle and fitted like a glove.

Our next cruise was to Calcutta, and a very interesting visit it was. This was in November 1859, just two years after the outbreak of the great Mutiny, which was even then hardly suppressed on the North-West frontier. Everybody's mind was full of the horrors of this great tragedy and of the heroic deeds of our soldiers and of the small naval brigade, composed of almost every fighting man from the crews of the *Shannon* and *Pearl*, under the command of the gallant Peel, the captain of the *Shannon*, who after transporting a powerful battery of 65 cwt. 8-inch guns from Calcutta to Lucknow and rendering splendid service in the suppression of the mutiny, died of smallpox at Cawnpore.

The navigation of the tidal waters of the Hoogli from the Sand Heads to Calcutta was a very different business from the navigation of the Yang-tze. Instead of groping our way amongst the shallows without pilot and without chart, the ship was taken charge of by a very grand pilot in uniform, who brought with him two young gentlemen to act as leadsmen (sucking-pilots they were) and his own leadlines marked to feet instead of fathoms.

The pilotage of the Hoogli is most difficult and intricate and the pilots are highly paid and have to undergo many years' apprenticeship, commencing as leadsmen. The currents are strong

and the sand-banks shift frequently, so that the river is in a constant state of being resurveyed and charted. Moreover the rise and fall of the tide is so uncertain that there are tide gauges and semaphore stations at intervals along the banks, and these make signals to the pilots of passing ships, stating the exact depth of water on the various bars, of which there are a good many. The pilot never left the bridge while the ship was under way, and his meals were taken to him on deck; but the young-gentlemen-leadsmen were allowed a spell off occasionally, one at a time, and we took them down and fed them in our berth, and listened to some tall stories of the dangers of the navigation of the river, and how ships even in charge of pilots had been known to run on to brand new shoals and got rolled right over with the force of the current and all hands drowned; to which we replied with shocking stories of the perils of the open sea.

There were two routes to Calcutta in 1859: the long sea route round the Cape, carried on by sailing ships, and the "overland" route by Suez, which was mainly in the hands of the P. & O Company and worked with steamers. There were two sets of steamers, and these of course carried the mails to the East and to the Far East. The Home Squadron ran the mails and passengers to Alexandria, and these then crossed over to Suez; in the early days on camels and later by rail. At Suez they embarked in one of the Eastern Squadron of the P. & O. Company, which carried them to India or Hongkong. There was practically no competition with the P. & O. in the

overland route at this time, so that fares were high and many passengers preferred the longer but cheaper route round the Cape in a sailing ship: and splendid ships of their day these "East Indiamen" were. Green had a line of magnificent frigate-built ships sailing round the Cape to Calcutta: they were as well-found and well-kept as men-of-war, and looked just like frigates—bar the guns; though of course in still earlier days all the East Indiamen did carry guns, and naval history tells us they fought some gallant actions against the enemies of their country; not always in pure self-defence, if I remember right. And why shouldn't they? War is war, and first blow, well directed, often counts for a good deal. It is only decadent nations that make up their minds to fight only in self-defence, and they always get licked by warlike neighbours and lose those possessions in the attempted preservation of which they acted "purely in self-defence." There can be no standing still in this world. A nation must either beat to windward or drift to leeward; and if it attempts to heave to, with the maintop-sail to the mast, it drifts to leeward, more or less rapidly, as every sailor knows. The warlike races inherit the earth, and industrialism has always made a poor show against militarism. A study of history seems to teach us that there is no alternative between foreign war and civil war. The so-called Peace Party are now working up rapidly towards civil war, and the International Labour Party will soon have to point their guns either against their own countrymen or against the foreigner. Perhaps both. Very sad, but indubitably true.

The East India Company was still in existence in 1859; though shortly afterwards it was abolished and the government of the country placed directly under the Crown. There was also a separate East Indian navy, in the pay of and under the management of the Company. I find in my private journal the following prejudiced and decidedly ill-natured remark: "There were some Indian navy ships lying here and we took a particular dislike to the Indian navy midshipmen. Most of them were snobs. They talked of nothing but themselves and their Service. They wore dirty white waistcoats and did not button their shirt collars." How could we officers of the Royal Navy possibly consort with brother officers who wore dirty white waistcoats and did not button their shirt-collars? The Indian Navy was shortly after this abolished.

Besides the Indian Navy ships we met at Calcutta, there was quite a large fleet of big Cape-route sailing-ships, to which I have before alluded, and although these ships did not carry guns, they were capable of doing so in case of emergency. They had main decks like frigates with large port-holes; but to have carried guns and ammunition would, of course, have detracted from their cargo-carrying capacity and passenger accommodation. Some of the older ones still had their sides adorned with quakers—relics of the old war. A quaker is a wooden gun-muzzle stuck on outside a painted port-hole, and was intended to frighten off the enemy's privateers; as of course a privateer, whose business was the plunder of unarmed merchant-ships, would not think of attacking a frigate with a tier of main-deck guns.

Dahabieh off Alexandria.

*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

Perhaps the privateers learnt to recognize a quaker, even at a distance; but naval history is unfortunately not very explicit upon this perplexing point.

From Calcutta we were ordered round to Karachi to assist in laying the first submarine telegraph cable to India. The length from Suez to Aden had already been laid and was working, and the connection was now to be made between Karachi and Aden. This was to be done in three lengths. Starting from Karachi, the first section was to go to Muskat, on the coast of Arabia, where it was to be landed and a telegraph station established; from thence to the Kuria Muria Islands, a small group of desert isles off the south coast of Arabia, where it was again to be landed and another station established; and from thence to Aden. This was rather a roundabout route, and the cable now goes direct from Aden to Bombay; but in these early days of deep-sea cables there had not been much experience, either in the manufacture of the cables or in the art of laying them, and deep water and great single lengths were avoided as much as possible. There was one stretch of very deep water between Karachi and Muskat; this was just to the eastward of Muskat, across the mouth of the Gulf of Oman, which forms the entrance to the Persian Gulf.

The two ships selected for laying the cable were the *Impérador* and *Impératrice*, which had been built in England for the Brazilian Government, but were purchased before completion and specially fitted with all the up-to-date appliances for cable-laying. The *Retribution* and the *Cyclops* (an

old paddle-wheel man-of-war sloop) met them at Karachi and escorted them during the operation, to clear the course and to render assistance if necessary. The contractors for laying the cable were Newall & Co., and to the best of my recollection the terms of the contract required them to lay the cable and work all three sections of it successfully for two months. We heard afterwards that the first length broke down about a week after the two months had expired, and that the whole of it had ceased to work within six months; but this did not by any means imply dishonesty or skimping on the part of the contractors, but simply want of experience in the manufacture and laying of deep-sea cables, an art which is now on a very different footing.

The landing of the shore end of the cable at Karachi was made the occasion for a great show of bunting, with plenty of cheering and our brass band playing patriotic airs, and then, when all was ready, the *Impérador* started off, paying out the cable very slowly at first and then more rapidly as she got into deeper water. The *Retribution* led the way and the old *Cyclops* brought up the rear, illuminating the midnight sky with red flames out of her funnel, struggling to keep up with us at 6½ miles an hour. The exciting time came on the third day, when we had to cross the entrance to the Gulf of Oman, where the depth of water was 2,000 fathoms and the cable ran out rather quicker than was intended; but all went well: the cable was not checked, the *Impérador* went on a little faster, the old *Cyclops* was left out of sight, and we got into Muskat harbour all right, landed

the end safely, established a telegraph station at this sun-baked depôt for the contraband arms traffic, greatly pitying the unfortunate clerks who had to stay there and work it, and then went on with the next length to the Kuria Muria Islands. But if we pitied the unfortunate operators who were to be left at Muskat to work the telegraph at that station, we found on arrival at the Kuria Muria Islands that their colleagues to be left there were still more deserving of our sympathy, for of all the derelict cinder-heaps on the face of the earth, not even excepting Socotra, these desert islands seem to take the palm. It is to be hoped that they did not have to stay there long, for if they did they probably stayed there altogether.

Finally we completed the direct telegraph from England to India by joining up at Aden with the Red Sea section, fired a royal salute, dressed ship, played "God Save the Queen" and "Rule, Britannia," said goodbye to our friends in the two telegraph ships, and then returned to Bombay to dock the old *Retribution*, which was showing still more marked signs of senile decay. She leaked badly whenever we were on the port tack, the seams opened and the water came in, and if we were steaming and sailing at the same time and the ship heeling over, the cranks of the engines cut into the fore-and-aft carlings like cheese, showing that the upper deck, with its ten heavy guns, was loose and sagging over to leeward. So the old ship was docked, and when the copper and outside planking on the port side before the paddle-wheel were taken off the timbers fell out into the dock quite rotten, so that she might really have gone

down under us in the first gale of wind we got into.

The question now was whether she could be patched up sufficiently to make her staunch enough to go home round the Cape and weather the storms we were likely to meet there, for there was no Suez Canal yet. So a survey was made, the result of which was that the job was to be taken in hand. The ship was in dock for three months, and during that time the crew had to be disposed of, as they could not live on board in dry dock. An old merchant-barque called the *Euphemia* was hired, and some of us lived on board her and some on board an old Indian Navy steamer which had had her engines and boilers removed and was used as a receiving ship. She was infested with cockroaches. Never before nor since have I seen such monsters. They were as big as locusts, and in the evening when the candles were lighted they used to get up in flocks like sparrows and fly about the cabin with a loud whirr. Two or three would get into your cup of tea, one or two into your hair, and one would probably crawl down the back of your neck. They smelt abominably. It was really no use killing them, as it seemed to make no difference to their numbers, and they were a perfect plague. The weather was very hot and there was no ice, as the expected ice-ship had been wrecked just outside Bombay harbour, and any ice there was left in the town was earmarked for the hospitals. Well do I remember that ice famine. Ice had been getting scarce and expensive for some time, but our comprador used to tell us cheerfully every

morning, "Ice-ship soon come, sar; perhaps come to-morrow morning." This went on for some time, price of ice steadily rising, until one fine morning came the sad news that the expected ice-ship had gone ashore and become a total wreck a few miles to the southward of Bombay. Many boats went round to her, and some of the ice was salved as she broke up, but the price was prohibitive and we had to drink warm water, or warm beer, which was nearly as bad.

About this time there was a great cotton fire at Bombay. There were some thousands of bales standing on the wharf. They were loose, unpressed bales of raw cotton, about 8 feet long by 4 square, sewn up loosely in sacking. They were not ready for shipping to Manchester, as they would have to pass through the hydraulic press and be squeezed down to about a third of their size, and hooped with iron bands before being shipped for export. It was these loose bales, standing close to the edge of the wharf, which took fire; and a happy—or unhappy—thought occurred to those in charge of the wharf, that the best thing to do was to get long poles and push the burning bales into the sea. This was done, with the result that instead of quenching the burning cotton, it drifted along the wharf with the current, and little pieces of it flew up and ignited other bales which were standing close to the edge of the wharf, until, in a short time, there was half a mile of burning cotton bales, and most of these were pushed off into the harbour and drifted about amongst the shipping, much to the consternation of those on board, particularly to that of the

captain of a brig laden with combustibles; but although no ship was set on fire, the surface of Bombay harbour was for many hours covered with burning and smouldering cotton, giving off a pungent and suffocating smoke which got into our eyes and almost blinded us. I was sent away in a boat with our hand fire-engine to help to put the fire out; but our pigmy squirt was quite useless, so we tried to beat the burning cotton under water with the blades of the oars, but nothing seemed to put it out: water seemed to have no effect upon it, and if you drove a lump of the burning stuff under water it came up again all alight. There was no absolute flame, but a good deal of heat, and at one time our boat got into an extra hot corner, where the burning cotton lay very thick on the water, and the thin, white, pungent smoke got into our throats and our eyes, so that we were quite overcome by it, and we all lay down in the bottom of the boat with the tears streaming down our cheeks, tearfully chaffing each other with, "What are you crying about?" Happily we drifted out of it, and then returned to our ship, as our labour was in vain. There was no further damage done beyond the loss of the cotton, as the wind was offshore. Had it been otherwise the consequences might have been serious, as this was just before the monsoon and everything was dry as tinder.

After we had been about a month on board the *Euphemia* and the *Auckland* these two old hulks were declared to be insanitary, though I am not sure that this was the word used; probably there was some other word in use at this time

which expressed the same thing. Anyhow they did stink, both of them, and as we had several cases of cholera and one or two deaths, it was decided to land the ship's company on a little island called Butcher's Island, at the head of Bombay harbour, not far from the island which contains the famous rock caves of Elephanta. Here we spent another two months while the ship was still in dock, and a very dull time it was, though better than in the two evil-smelling old hulks. The two great difficulties the officers had to encounter were, to find suitable and healthy employment for the men, and to prevent liquor from being smuggled on to the island, with the consequent drunkenness which this always produces. Smuggling liquor! I suppose there is no crime in the whole naval category which has been responsible for so much trouble, so much punishment, so much drunkenness, so much disrating of otherwise excellent and trustworthy petty officers, as the crime of smuggling liquor. There is—or perhaps I should say there was—an absolute mania amongst seamen for smuggling liquor on board ship. Every conceivable trick and deception was used for outwitting the officers and the ship's police. Special skins of all sorts of shapes and sizes were used for concealment about the person, so as to evade the search by the master-at-arms and ship's corporals, which always took place when the liberty men returned from leave or from any place where they might possibly have been able to buy spirits. I really think this smuggling was often done from an innate love of risk and sport; the great joy of weathering "Johndy" (the master-at-

arms), and the common idea that anything clandestinely obtained, like stolen kisses, must be better than things prosaically and legitimately acquired. Marryat in one of his novels gives an account of one of the dodges used in his day, known as "sucking the monkey." Innocent looking green coconuts were brought on board by the black bumboat-women at Port Royal and sold to the crew: but there had been a tiny hole made in one end of them, the natural milk drawn off and its place taken by new Jamaica rum, which is rather heady stuff.

If it was difficult to frustrate the arts of the liquor-smuggler on board ship, it was almost impossible to check his illegal traffic when the crew were living on shore in huts on Butcher's Island. Boats would come off from the mainland at night, and by prearrangement bottles of arrack would be planted, like the treasures of the buccaneers, on a certain bearing—so many paces distant from such and such a tree, there dig, and one foot below the surface you will find that which will make you either jolly or dead drunk, according to how much you drink. The risks to both vendor and buyer were considerable, and no doubt the prices were high; but then the *sport* of it!

We had a sort of a cricket ground on Butcher's Island, and we used to play there for an hour or two in the evenings; but the weather was very hot, the ice-ship had been wrecked, and we were glad enough to get back again on board our ship as soon as she came out of dock. The repairs had been only in the nature of a patched-up job, just to give us a chance of weathering the storms

off the Cape and of getting home alive. The ship had no ribs on the port side before the paddle-box, so it was deemed wise to strike all the upper-deck guns down into the hold, to remove all shot from the shot-racks, so as to relieve the strain on the weak side as much as possible, and to carry sail on the port tack with discretion. This was done, and we got safe home to old England in the depth of the coldest winter (1860–1) which had been known for many years.

I do not remember much about the passage home, except that I was in bed a good deal of the time with an attack of peritonitis, which very nearly finished me, and from which it is scarcely possible I could have recovered had not my kind-hearted, generous shipmate, J. S. Moore, the commodore's secretary, given up his cabin to me and accepted the discomfort of swinging in my hammock on the main deck: a genuine act of kindness to which, I believe, I owe my life, and for which I have never been able to make the smallest requital. But I have at least the consolation of knowing that the men who do such acts never look for or think of requital. They do them out of the sheer generosity of their hearts and from the love of doing good. And this reminds one of the argument of the constitutionally selfish man who, on being reproved by a friend for his selfishness, and told to look at and admire the generous acts of his brother Tom, who was always doing something kind for his neighbours, replied: "Ah yes, that's just the difference between us; it gives Tom real pleasure to do these things, but it does not give me any.

Tom is therefore pursuing his own pleasure just as much as I am by spending all my money on myself: so it seems to me that Tom is just every bit as selfish as I am, for we are both seeking our own pleasure in our own way."

Philosophy? or Sophistry?

I have devoted a very large proportion of my space to the commission of the *Retribution.* It was a very interesting commission. I do not think it would have been possible for a youngster of my age—fifteen when we left England—to have selected a more interesting cruise, had he been given free choice in the matter. First a trip up the Mediterranean; then out to the Pacific, via the Canaries, Rio Janiero, the Falkland Islands, Straits of Magellan, and Valparaiso. A year on the Pacific Station; then across to China and Japan—a year there; then on to the East Indies—a year there; and then home round the Cape. Four years and four months altogether, counting passages. Out a boy, home a man; and I did not know my own brother when I met him. I quote the following from my journal: "We dismantled the old ship and paid her off alongside the jetty at Portsmouth. It was December and very cold, and there was ice and snow everywhere. When we had been alongside the dockyard for two or three days and our lower yards and other spars were lying on the jetty, I was walking up and down looking at my home for four years, with nothing standing save her lower masts and funnels, when presently I saw some one else walking up and down and looking very hard at me, but apparently not liking to speak, as if he

were not sure of me. I thought I had seen him before, but was also doubtful about it and was shy of speaking first. In this way we walked up and down two or three times, looking hard at each other, like a couple of strange dogs, but with the main-yard lying on the jetty between us, until at last I thought that, being so close to my own kennel, I might speak first; so I asked him if he wanted to see anybody on board the ship, and then directly we spoke we knew each other's voices and discovered that we were brothers. It was Bob, who had come to look for me; and then a little later two uncles, James Ingham and James Gordon, appeared, and we all dined together at the George Hotel that night," and a merry party we were.

## CHAPTER IX

The hard winter of 1860–1—My only shipwreck—I join the *Ariadne* at Plymouth—I am promoted to be a lieutenant—Cod-fish for the Prince of Wales—Examples of Captain Vansittart's fine seamanship.

WHEN the *Retribution* was paid off I was an acting mate, and in order to be confirmed in that rank I had to pass three examinations—seamanship, gunnery, and navigation—"college," as the latter was called. I had no fear about the seamanship, and the only really difficult one was the gunnery on board the *Excellent*; but thanks to the assiduous and efficient instructions of our well-loved friend, Robert Woollcombe, Royal Marine Artillery—who had conducted the whole of the gunnery training of both officers and men for four years, without emolument of any sort—all the midshipmen of the *Retribution* took first-class certificates in gunnery.

Those who are old enough will probably remember the winter of 1860–1; and those who are not old enough may take my word for it that it was a very hard winter. The Thames was frozen at London Bridge, and I remember hearing that an ox was roasted whole on the ice. I skated on the Serpentine in Hyde Park, where the ice was over a foot thick, but soon got cut

up and like a ploughed field, and was not worth skating on after the first week. They tried flooding it in places: but to the best of my recollection this only made "cat ice," which was worse than the original ruts.

I do not propose to dwell long upon the doings of "Jack ashore" during the four months I spent on dry land after paying off from the *Retribution*, as my yarn is entitled "Memories of the Sea," and not of the shore. Yet I must not omit to mention the only shipwreck that I ever suffered, which occurred while I was ashore!

It happened as follows, and I am afraid was rather ignominious for a hardy tar who had just sailed round the world and thought he knew a lot. My eldest brother, who was afterwards Member for Cambridge for eighteen years, was an undergraduate at Trinity Hall, and I went up and spent two months with him, and a right good time I had, for all the available sports and amusements were open to me, without the lectures and chapels; and amongst other sports, I did a good deal of rowing on the River Cam, but in a style of craft which was very unlike those to which I was accustomed. To the best of my recollection, the dimensions of the ship I was wrecked in were: length, 28 feet; beam, 8 inches; depth, 4 inches; weight, 30 pounds: and in this more or less seaworthy craft I was in the habit of rowing down the river every afternoon to watch the college eights practising for the May races. I had acquired a fair amount of skill in fresh-water seamanship. I could sit in a sculling-boat without capsizing, could clear the water with my

oars without dribbling, and could get up a pretty good head of speed, and, in fact, I thought I knew all about it; when one afternoon, as I was swinging gaily along, I met a string of nine coal-laden barges coming up the river, towed by horses. There looked to me to be plenty of room to pass them on the right side, and I innocently entered the trap; but when I got abreast of the third or fourth barge it became obvious that they were all swinging in rapidly towards the bank, and that I should soon be nipped; and almost before I could realize what was going to happen I was fairly caught. One of the barges caught the bow of my fragile craft; the stern went in against the bank, and in far less time than it takes to write it my boat shut up lengthways like one of those pocket spyglasses, and there was not a bit of her left more than three or four feet long. I had just time to step out into one of the barges and pull the oars and the remains of the boat in after me; and there I was, sitting on a heap of coal, with the visible signs of the disaster around me, shipwrecked on a miserable inland ditch like the Cam, all the college eights rowing down the river and stopping to laugh at me, which they had a perfect right to do; for what can possibly be more amusing than the misfortunes of our neighbours? The boat was a new one, which my brother had just had built for him, and in which he had intended to row for the Colquhoun Sculls.

After spending about two months at Cambridge and enjoying myself thoroughly on a mate's half-pay of 2s. 6d. a day, I was appointed to the

*Ariadne* at Plymouth, and joined her there early in May, 1861.

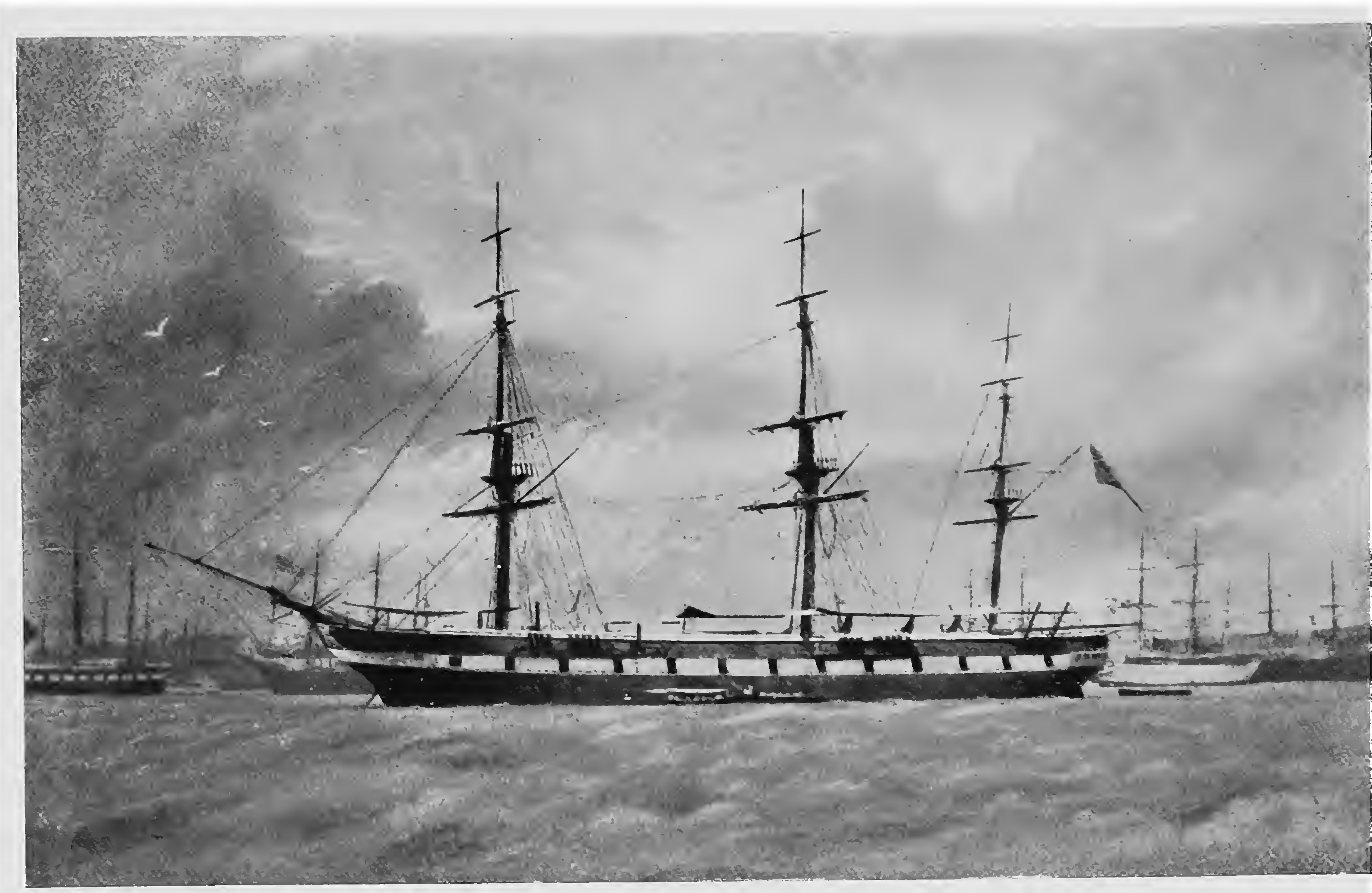
The *Ariadne* was a great contrast to the old *Retribution*, which, I need scarcely say, never went to sea again. The former was quite new, and was the finest frigate in the British Navy. In fact, it would not be too much to say that she and her sister-ship, the *Galatea*, were the two finest wooden frigates ever built in this or any other country, for we were then on the eve of changing from wood to iron and steel, and then later to the abolition of sails altogether. There were two other big frigates built about the same time, the *Mersey* and *Orlando*; but they were rather overdone and regarded somewhat as monstrosities. They lacked that just balance of proportions and that indescribable symmetry of lines which distinguished the *Ariadne* and *Galatea*, and which is so obvious to the eye of a sailor but so puzzling to that of a landsman, who looks upon all ships very much as we do upon a flock of sheep—all alike.

The *Ariadne* was in dry dock at Devonport when I joined her one evening in May, and on the following morning the first lieutenant put me in charge of a party of men to go down in the dock and scrub the ship's bottom. Whilst so employed, an orderly brought me a letter which informed me that "their lordships had been pleased to promote me to the rank of lieutenant." And as it pleased me also, and as I thought the *Ariadne* was a very fine-looking ship, both top and bottom, and as I had had a good spell on shore and was restless to get to sea again, I thought I

could not do better than apply to be reappointed to her as a lieutenant, which I did, and in a few days received my appointment as "part complement," the ship being one lieutenant short of her complement. This was lucky—doubly lucky—for Captain Vansittart told me afterwards that he thought I looked too young, and that as he wanted an older and more experienced hand, he had written upon my application, before forwarding it to the Admiralty, "This application is not solicited"; and he further told me, in confidence, that the Sea Lord of the Admiralty whose duty it was to appoint lieutenants, and who was a personal friend of his, wrote to him privately in a somewhat bantering tone to tell him that he had gone the very way to get me appointed, by saying that he did not wish it!

When I joined the *Ariadne* she had been about six months in commission and had just returned from Canada, where she escorted the Prince of Wales (our late gracious Sovereign King Edward), who flew his standard on board the new 90-gun line-of-battle ship *Hero* during his visit to that country.

My new messmates were full of the story of Captain Vansittart and the basket of fish, a story which I have been told the late King Edward was very fond of repeating, with admiration of the seamanship displayed on the occasion. The incident happened before I joined the *Ariadne*, so I can only repeat the story as I heard it; though I am bound to say I have rarely, if ever, heard a story—a nautical story—told by many different people with fewer variations, and therefore



H.M.S. *ARIADNE.*

***From a drawing by the Author.***

I have no doubt that the main features of it, as described below, are substantially correct.

The *Hero* and *Ariadne* were returning from Canada, and were crossing the great Bank of Newfoundland before a fresh S.W. breeze, the *Hero* with every stitch of sail set, stunsails alow and aloft, but the *Ariadne*, which greatly outsailed the *Hero*, carrying much reduced sail, in order to keep in her station astern of the *Hero*. They were passing through a fleet of the cod-fishing schooners, and Captain Vansittart asked leave of his senior officer to heave to and buy fish. This was granted, and the *Ariadne* hove to, lowered a boat and bought fish, and by the time this was done and the boat hoisted, the *Hero* was a long way ahead; but the *Ariadne* made all sail and had no difficulty in catching her, and while she was coming up with her, Captain Vansittart made up a fine hamper of fresh codfish, with a label attached—"For His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, with Captain Vansittart's compliments." All very well; but how was the hamper to be got on board the *Hero* without stopping both ships and lowering another boat? This was how it was done, and a very pretty piece of risky seamanship it must have been: A whip was put on the main-yard and the hamper bent on to it. The *Ariadne* was then sailed up abreast of the *Hero*, and sail was shortened until the speed of the two ships was just equal. The *Ariadne* then sheered in very gradually until she got so close to the *Hero* that as the two ships rolled their yards actually crossed each other. The hamper was hoisted about half-way up to the yardarm, and at the

psychological moment, when the *Ariadne* rolled towards the *Hero*, the whip was let go and the hamper fell upon the quarter-deck of the *Hero*, from which officers and men had been warned to stand clear. It was said that the captain and officers of the *Hero* showed some signs of nervousness on this occasion; and well they might, for they did not know "old Van"—as we irreverently called him—a man of iron nerves, a splendid seaman, and with absolute confidence in himself.

His Royal Highness was much gratified, and made a complimentary signal to Captain Vansittart; but it was said that the captain of the *Hero* was not so well pleased, and asked him not to do it again.

On several other occasions during our three years' commission old Van gave us exhibitions of his wonderful nerve and self-confidence, one of which I well remember. We were getting under way from the anchorage at Quebec late in the month of November. Winter had set in early, it was very cold, blowing hard, with frequent showers of sleet and snow, a crowded anchorage and a strong current; and just as our anchor was atrip, down came the snow so thick that we could not see half a ship's length in any direction. Most captains would have veered cable again and hung on till the weather cleared; but this was not old Van's way of doing business, so the anchor was hove up, catted and fished, and the engine's put "slow ahead," so as just to stem the current, which was running at least five knots. Then we had to turn, to get the ship's head down the river, where we wanted to go; and all masters

and pilots will admit that this was a ticklish business under the circumstances. We had a pilot on board, but old Van insisted on taking charge, and put the helm over for turning. It was a regular case of blindman's buff; but we had not long to wait to see what was going to happen, for we very soon ran into an old merchant-barque called the *Koh-i-noor*, taking her nearly broadside on between her fore and main mast, our cutwater cutting deep into her side. It looked as if she would probably founder immediately, and the captain and crew swarmed in over our bow-sprit; the captain with his chronometer under his arm and the mate with the ship's book. Now came the pinch. (If this is all too technical, lands-men can skip it.) The *Koh-i-noor* had two anchors down, but the anchors of a 500-ton barque would not hold a 3,000-ton frigate in a five-knot tide, and the two ships began to drift down the river, the *Ariadne* stuck fast in the *Koh-i-noor*. A big catastrophe seemed to be inevitable, for we were drifting helplessly down towards a crowded part of the anchorage, and it looked as if we were going to act like the typical bull in a china-shop, by sweeping away half a dozen more ships and finally piling up on a sand-bank ourselves, for the pilot was no longer responsible. Under these circum-stances old Van, without a moment's hesitation, ordered "full speed ahead, hard a starboard." The *Ariadne's* head was pointed up the river, and with the *Koh-i-noor* across her bows like a piper in the jaws of a garfish, dragging both anchors along with us we steamed up to a clear berth—the weather having fortunately cleared—stopped the

engines, backed out, and left the *Koh-i-noor* riding to her own anchors, anchoring just below her ourselves.

The *Koh-i-noor* did not sink, she was not stove below the water-line, as we did not have useless and pernicious rams on our ship's bows in those days: our carpenters and shipwrights made her seaworthy in a couple of days, and we went to sea and returned to Halifax.

A man with a weaker nerve than Captain Vansittart, or one who had hesitated when he found himself in such a dilemma, would have caused a vast amount more damage to the shipping in the St. Lawrence than that which happened. But then on the other hand people may say—and say truly—that a more cautious man would not have got under way at all under the circumstances. True, no doubt. Caution is all very well in its way, though it is possible to have too much of it in a service like the navy. Caution does not win battles nor build empires; and if a more cautious man had been in command of the British Mediterranean Squadron on August 2, 1798, Bruey's fleet would have been afloat under the French flag for many a day after that date. And Napoleon? Well, the devil knows what he might have done.

## CHAPTER X

The *Ariadne* sails for the West Indies—The *Bittern* in Chinese waters—A visit to New York—Trouble in the Gulf of Mexico—Maximilian's end—Admiral Milne—Relic-hunting—A cricket match.

I MADE the last chapter a very short one, as I want to say to the reader, before I go any farther, that I do not propose to maintain the chronological order which I have so far done in recording my memories of the sea, and this for two reasons. First, I think that the journalistic method I have been using must be getting tiresome to the reader, and rather too much like a ship's log, or a blue-book; and secondly, I find that my notes and journals are of a far more fragmentary nature than they were in the *Retribution*, for when I found myself "in a position of greater freedom" I ceased to keep a regular journal of any sort, never dreaming that anything I was seeing or doing could be of the smallest interest to any one but myself; nor have I that truthful and accurate record—a midshipman's log—to fall back upon.

I have already said that the *Ariadne* was the finest frigate in the navy, and it really was a pleasure to handle that ship under sail as officer of the watch. There was something for the officer of the watch to do in those days besides walking

up and down the bridge and turning the engine-room telegraph handle. One had to keep one's wits about one and look out for squalls; and in the *Ariadne* we had to look out for squalls in more senses than one, for old Van was a bit of a Tartar and had a rough side to his tongue. He used to sleep with one eye open, and if we did not love him we all respected him, for he was a splendid seaman, and he seemed to know everything that was going on on deck when he was sitting in his cabin in the daytime or nominally asleep in his bunk at night. He had one fault, perhaps more than one, but at any rate one that he owned up to. He spoilt the midshipmen (alas! I was a lieutenant). No midshipman could do wrong. The first lieutenant was not allowed to stop their leave, give them watch and watch, or punish them in any way, so that they were released from all discipline, cheeked their senior officers, and did whatsoever they pleased. It was a very mistaken kindness on old Van's part, and the results were deplorable, for very few of them got on in the Service and several came to grief altogether.

When the officer of the watch went into the captain's cabin to make his reports, he generally found three or four midshipmen lolling about on armchairs or sprawling on the sofas, and old Van writing at his desk. There was hardly any smoking by officers in those days, otherwise no doubt the midshipmen would all have been smoking cigarettes and dropping the ashes about the carpet. They patronized the lieutenants and were generally quite civil to us, though not always; and we had not the slightest control over them, either on or

off duty. Needless to say this was not conducive to the general discipline of the ship; for "Jack" is an imitative animal. Old Van was not a bit ashamed of his hobby, but admitted to all his brother captains that he spoilt his midshipmen. Thus he acknowledged his transgression and truly his sin was ever before him; but as he was always very strict—not to say haughty—towards all the other officers, he probably consoled himself with the idea that he had succeeded in squaring the circle of discipline.

The *Ariadne* sailed for the West Indies in the summer of 1861. The American Civil War was then in full swing, and Great Britain kept a powerful squadron in those waters and at Bermuda and Halifax during its whole course; and indeed, there were one or two occasions when it seemed likely that we should have to take a hand: notably after the incident known as the "Trent affair," when the British mail steamer *Trent* was stopped on the high seas by a United States (Northern) cruiser and two ambassadors from the Southern States (Messrs. Slidel and Mason), on their way to England, were forcibly removed from her. This outrage was a little too much for even peace-loving England, and their release was peremptorily demanded by the British Government; it being clearly understood that a refusal to comply with this demand would inevitably lead to war.

Uncle Sam was very sore just at this time and not at all inclined to knuckle down; but on second thoughts he came to the conclusion that to have Great Britain on top of him at the same time that he had a big civil war on hand, would be rather

more than he could manage, so Slidel and Mason were released, with an apology. There was no doubt great sympathy in England with the Southern States in their revolt. The question of slavery—which was at the bottom of it all—was temporarily lost sight of by most Englishmen, who naturally backed the small boy against the big one—the weaker Power fighting for its freedom, its " freedom " to enforce " slavery " and whop its own niggers.

Old Van, who was spoiling for a fight, made a very warlike speech to the ship's company of the *Ariadne* on the occasion of the strained relations over the "Trent affair." He was not a man of many words, but he worked us up to a high pitch of excitement and indignation at the outrage to our flag, and made us all think that war with the United States was almost a certainty and only a question of a few days; but it all fizzled out and nothing came of it.

I have frequently heard it remarked by brother officers that it was a great pity there was not a big naval war during the period that Captain Vansittart commanded ships, just to give him a chance of showing his quality; and he no doubt would have done something startling, for he was unacquainted with the meaning of the word "caution." In proof of which I must relate an incident which occurred when he was in command of the *Bittern*, a small 12-gun brig, in China.

The British merchants at Shanghai had complained to the admiral in command on that station that there had been a series of piratical outrages all along the coast between Foochow

and Shanghai. Several trading ships had been attacked by the pirates, the crews murdered, and the ships plundered and burnt. Under these circumstances the admiral ordered Commander Vansittart—as he then was—to go and hunt for the pirates, whose headquarters were believed to be in one of the islands of the Chusan Archipelago. Van sought information and paid for it, the Chinaman being always ready to betray his own countrymen for money, though in this case he was no doubt justified. After a prolonged search the pirates' stronghold was found, and one fine afternoon the *Bittern* sailed with a fair wind into a snug little harbour and let go her anchor. She was received with a hot fire from half a dozen armed piratical junks and two mud batteries mounted with brass cannon. The sails were clewed up, but without waiting to furl them the guns were manned and the *Bittern* blazed away for half an hour; at the end of which time nearly all the ammunition was expended, and although the fire of the junks had been silenced, the batteries were still firing. The situation was critical, as the *Bittern* could not get out of the harbour with the wind blowing straight into it. Fortunately the enemy's fire had not been very accurate, and although the brig had been hulled several times and lost some men, the boats had not been seriously damaged; so Van piped "man and arm boats," and landed with every available man, stormed the batteries, sent the rascals scuttling up-country, captured and brought off all the brass guns, burnt the junks, and sailed out the harbour again as soon as the wind came fair.

I should like to have seen Van's face when the gunner reported to him that the ammunition was nearly expended, and the batteries were still firing at him; for he loved being in a tight place.

A "cautious" man would scarcely have been successful in ridding the China Seas of this nest of pirates; a service for which Commander Vansittart was promoted to the rank of captain; and he was also presented with a handsome service of silver plate by the merchants of Shanghai, both British and foreign. Yet this fine fighting seaman never hoisted his flag as an admiral, but was placed on the retired list as a captain. Men of this type never shine in the piping times of peace; they hate red tape, kick against irksome regulations, are frequently at loggerheads with their pedantic superiors, and are scorned, neglected, and not uncommonly ridiculed by those whose safety, honour, welfare, and wealth entirely depend upon the warlike qualities of the men who defend their money-bags. It has ever been so, and it reminds one of Rudyard Kipling's pithy lines:

> "For it's Tommy this and Tommy that,
> And chuck him out, the brute,
> But it's 'Saviour of 'is country'
> When the guns begins to shoot."

And also of an old song that I used to hear sung long years ago, the chorus to which was,

> "Then oh protect the hardy Tar,
> 'Tis policy to do it,
> Or when grim war shall come again
> Oh, Britons, ye may rue it."

Vansittart lived and died a confirmed bachelor; more's the pity, as we shall want some of this breed when next grim war shall come again and the "guns begins to shoot," in the North Sea or elsewhere.

And now after this little digression in memory of my old captain, I must return to the *Ariadne*, which paid a visit to New York shortly after her arrival on the North American Station. This was in the winter of 1861–2, and—as I have before reminded the reader—the United States were at this time in the throes of their great Civil War. Enormous bounties were being offered to men to enlist in the Northern armies. Nationality was of no consequence so long as the men were ready to fight for the Northerners and help to whip those darned Secesh rebels; and the temptation of a big bounty and the Field-Marshal's baton which he was to carry in his knapsack was too much for some of our discontented characters who were pining for a change of life; which they got by deserting from the British Navy and joining the Northern army; but whether they got the bounty or not we never heard, for none of them ever came back to us. Probably the crimps who seduced them got the bounty and our men the baton. We lost twenty-two men altogether, notwithstanding that no leave was given and that we were not lying immediately off New York city, but off Staten Island, six miles down the harbour; yet in spite of the strictest precautions it was impossible to prevent those from deserting who wanted to go. All sorts of dodges were resorted to. For instance, if the second gig was called

away to hook on (in order to be hoisted) instead of the second gig's proper crew getting into her, four or five would-be deserters would get in, and instead of hooking on they would row on shore, cast the boat adrift, and march up-country. We had double sentries round the ship, loaded with ball cartridge, and they were ordered to fire at the deserters, but they never hit any, and did not even seem to frighten them. In fact, all the sympathy of those who did not themselves want to desert was entirely with those who did. The United States officers were very civil about it, admitted that desertion was a sad crime, and promised to do all in their power to apprehend and return our deserters; but told us frankly that there were great difficulties about it, as their own men not infrequently deserted and went off to join another regiment under another name, so as to get another bounty. For some time they were not successful in apprehending any of our deserters, but one afternoon an officer came on board and reported that four of our men had been caught and were safely locked up in the guardroom, and that if we would send a guard of marines on shore to take charge of them they would be duly handed over to us. So a sergeant and six veterans were sent on shore to bring off the runaways, but after some considerable delay the sergeant and his men returned on board and reported that when they got to the guardroom they found it empty, and were informed that about an hour before their arrival the United States guard and our four deserters had fraternized and marched off together in "citizens'

clothing" to join some other regiment. Never shall I forget the shouts of laughter that arose from the lower deck when the news spread to that quarter.

Under the above circumstances we did not stay longer at New York than we could help, and sailed off to the Gulf of Mexico, where there was also trouble on hand.

I have more than once begged the reader to remember that I am not undertaking to write history; yet it would be difficult to understand why the *Ariadne* found herself in company with powerful British, French, and Spanish squadrons lying off Vera Cruz during the greater part of the summer of 1862 without presenting a brief historical sketch of the situation in Mexico at that date; and this I propose to do by quoting from a popular modern history the following concise but comprehensive account of the situation :—

"For years during the confused condition of the country [Mexico] the rights and property of foreigners had been frequently violated without the demands for indemnification of the European Powers having met with any response; but complaints and protests became more frequent when the 'puros' under Juarez came into power. Instead of satisfying these demands, the chief thought of the new Government was to fill the empty treasury. Congress passed a law according to which all payments, including the interest on the debt to England, were to be suspended for two years and the inland duties on foreign wares were to be doubled. At this point the Government of Spain succeeded in persuading France

and England to adopt joint measures against the Republic. By the convention of London (October 31, 1861) the three Powers—France, England and Spain—declared that on account of the unreliability of the Mexican authorities they felt compelled to demand better protection for their subjects and their property, and to enforce the execution of the agreements stipulated by treaty, adding at the same time that they had no intention of curtailing the right of Mexico to choose and model her own form of government, nor did they have in mind any extensions of their own possessions or other private interests. After the conclusion of this convention three fleets with landing troops were dispatched to Mexico to demand satisfaction for the past and guarantees for the future. They occupied the city of Vera Cruz, together with the fort of San Juan de Uloa, which had been evacuated by the Spanish troops and officials, and took up camping positions inland, where the troops were less exposed to the ravages of the yellow fever. The Spaniards, under General Prim, camped in Orizaba; the French, under De la Gravière, in Tahuacan; the English commander, Sir Charles Wyke, chose Cordova. But since the expedition had no commander-in-chief, and a joint method of procedure was difficult of attainment, while at the same time the three leaders followed different ends and interests, the undertaking lacked strength and unity. Juarez responded to a manifesto drawn up in a moderate tone by the plenipotentiaries of the three Powers (February 19, 1862) by threatening to punish all who should

have any intercourse with the foreigners, and after long delay he rejected an ultimatum in words which sounded like an insult.

The above is no doubt a fair account of the position of affairs in Mexico when the *Ariadne* joined the international squadrons lying in the anchorage off Vera Cruz in the spring of 1862. There is, however, one important omission which seems to me to be rather in the nature of a *suppressio veri*, and this is, that the historian has neglected to mention that in consequence of the American Civil War, Uncle Sam was not in a position to flourish in the face of the three European Powers that international bone of contention known as the Monroe doctrine; for indeed it does not call for either a very wide stretch of imagination, or any special knowledge of international politics, in order to lead to the conclusion that had the United States been free to pursue their usual and well-known policy with regard to European interference on the Western Continent, we should have been spared the fiasco of the military occupation of Mexico by France, with the subsequent tragedy of the execution of the amiable Maximilian.

The historian I have quoted above tells us further: "But as the French harboured leaders of the Mexican reactionaries, and showed a disposition to interfere with Mexican domestic politics, which lay beyond the terms of the joint convention, Great Britain and Spain withdrew their forces in March, 1862." *

To the best of my recollection the British army landed in Mexico consisted of seven hundred

* "Historians' History of the World," vol. xxiii. p. 630–1.

marines; not taken from the ships, but a special battalion sent out from England. They lost a few men from yellow fever and then came home again, without adding anything to the laurels of that ubiquitous and distinguished corps, save giving one more proof—if indeed that were necessary—that they are ever ready at a moment's notice to go anywhere and do anything; though unfortunately in this case there was nothing for them to do.

It may perhaps be interesting to my readers if I recall to their memory the subsequent scenes of this Mexican drama. A French army occupied the city of Mexico. Louis Napoleon placed upon the throne the Archduke Maximilian, brother of Francis Joseph, the present Emperor of Austria, and he became Emperor of Mexico in June, 1864. But the new empire was unstable from the first. The country was not really conquered, and was in a constant state of turmoil and revolution. There was a good deal of desultory fighting, generally resulting in victory for the trained European troops. There were two centres of disturbance opposed to the emperor: one party led by Porfirio Diaz, who afterwards became President of the Mexican Republic for a great many years; and the other by Juarez, who was an uneducated half-blood Indian, but a born leader. Maximilian decreed that Juarez was a rebel, who, if captured, was to be tried by court-martial and shot. The French army of occupation was relieved by Austrian and Belgian troops, and the fighting went on with more or less regularity, until finally Jaurez defeated and captured Maximilian, tried him by court-martial, and shot him.

There was great excitement and fury in Europe about the shooting of Maximilian, which was stigmatized as a brutal and cold-blooded murder; though, as Maximilian had threatened to shoot Jaurez if he caught him, it seemed to unprejudiced onlookers to be only fair play that when Juarez defeated and captured Maximilian he was justified in shooting him—the invader of his country.

The above account of affairs in Mexico will explain why Great Britain, France, and Spain kept powerful squadrons in the Gulf of Mexico in 1861–2. The British squadron lying off Vera Cruz consisted at one time of two line-of-battle ships, three large frigates, and numerous smaller vessels; and a very dull and uninteresting time we had there. Yellow fever was raging in Vera Cruz city, and although we occasionally sent the stewards on shore to try and get fresh provisions, there was, practically speaking, no communication with the shore, and we might just as well have been at sea, where there would have been something to do looking after the sails.

That able and hard-headed Scotchman, Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, was the admiral in command of the North American and West Indian station at this time, and it was generally believed that it was mainly owing to his judicious management of affairs that war did not take place between England and the United States. How greatly might the course of history have been changed if we had gone to war over the *Trent* affair! There can indeed be little doubt that the Southern States would have gained their independence and the Great Republic split in twain.

Admiral Milne was too busy watching developments on the northern part of his station to come down to the Gulf of Mexico, so a first-class commodore (Hugh Dunlop) was appointed to take charge of the southern division: more in consequence of the large number of ships assembled off Vera Cruz than because there was anything for him to do; and indeed it would be scarcely possible to imagine any naval service more deadly dull than that which fell to our lot during the many weary months, both winter and summer, which we spent at the open anchorage, four miles from Vera Cruz city. The little harbour inside the islet of Juan de Uloa—where Hawkins and Drake were worsted in 1568—is only capable of accommodating quite small vessels; so that the international fleet spent its time at the Sacrificios anchorage, which is open to the north and only partially protected from the north-east by the little sandy islet and coral-reef of Sacrificios. During the winter months the "northers" come on very suddenly and blow with great violence; so that we were sometimes lying with three anchors ahead and steam up, in case of accidents. But the summer was the worst, as there was not then even the excitement of the northers, and the damp heat was very oppressive.

Our active-minded captain found the monotony very irksome, and volunteered to do "bumboat" for the squadron—an offer which was accepted by the commodore. So off we went to Havana for a cargo of bullocks, and a nice mess they made on our gun-deck with its twenty-four shining 10-inch gun, the biggest afloat. Then to Jamaica for

stores and provisions: so that perhaps altogether we were less to be pitied than the ships which laid at anchor the whole time; for we were doing *something*, if not exactly man-of-war work. Yet for all our bumboating and store-ship work we spent many weary weeks lying at the Sacrificios anchorage. There were plenty of turtles about, and we tried to catch them to vary our monotonous diet, but we did not know how, and we never got but one, which was caught in the seine. I discovered the trick afterwards, and caught plenty of them when I was down here a few years later in the *Cordelia;* but that will be another story.

The little sandy islet of Sacrificios where many a gallant French soldier now lies buried, is not more than about a dozen acres in extent, and its sole flora is canes and its fauna crabs; but it contains some interesting relics of the ancient Aztec race which inhabited Mexico at the time of the Spanish invasion under Cortez; and as there was little else to do in the way of taking exercise beyond hockey and rounders, some of my messmates, whose age and figures were unsuited to these boyish games, found their recreation in digging for Aztec remains. Old Van also found himself a little stiff for rounders, though he played once or twice and then joined the diggers; but like everything else he did, he went at it systematically. He landed every afternoon with the galley's crew, consisting of six stalwart sailors, and instead of digging about in a desultory sort of way, as the others were doing, he started to dig a trench six feet wide and three feet deep, right across the island; and in so doing he unearthed

a very interesting collection of Aztec remains, consisting mainly of pottery, with a few bronzes.

Some of us looked on idly; and then Satan—ever ready to find some mischief still for idle hands to do—entered into us, and the idea of playing a trick upon our imperious captain became irresistible. So two of us braved the yellow fever, went up to Vera Cruz, bought a quantity of cheap, tawdry, bright-painted children's toys, landed on Sacrificios in the dead of night, and planted them a few yards in front of the great trench.

In due course the toys were dug up and added to the collection without a word of remark, until a week or two later, when old Van, satisfied with his collection of Aztec remains, finished his digging, arranged his treasures in the *Ariadne's* fore cabin, and invited all the officers of the fleet to come and look at them. The practical jokers went too; and, by an extraordinary coincidence, the proud possessor of the collection paid particular and marked attention to them, calling their special notice to the wonderfully enduring colours the old Aztecs must have used, so that some of the things really looked "as if they had only been buried yesterday."

The old boy was very good-humoured about it: yet it was a trying moment for the culprits, who did not quite know what to say; nor did they ever find out how he managed to spot them; though they did know that it was very hard to get to windward of him at any game.

To such childish tricks were we reduced by the monotony of our long banishment to the Gulf of Mexico!

But all things must have an end, and in due course and with great joy we received orders to go to Halifax. Not a day too soon; for the crew were getting sickly and wanted a change of climate after their long stay in the tropics.

During our passage to the north—which, as usual, was made almost entirely under sail—we were joined at sea by two distinguished visitors in the shape of two great snowy owls. The ship was about fifty miles south-east of Cape Hatteras, beating to windward under double-reefed topsails and courses against a hard, cold, northerly wind, which shrivelled us up considerably after the damp heat of the Gulf of Mexico, when one forenoon a large white bird was seen perched upon the main truck, holding on for all he was worth. The parson was walking the quarter-deck, and says he: "Five shillings for any man who will bring that bird down alive." Up goes a small signal boy named Collins—one of the smallest boys in the ship; and then we watched as fine and as plucky a tussle as one could wish to see. The owl did not fly away, but stood his ground and showed fight. He had most formidable talons, which he used, and when Collins came down he was covered with blood. Nobody could help the lad, as there was only room for one up there, besides the owl; and the boy was first up, and was not going to give way to any one, or be beaten by man or owl.

The battle must have lasted for nearly half an hour, until finally the lad managed to get a clove hitch round one of the owl's legs with the signal halyards, and the great bird was hauled

down on deck, protesting vehemently; the victor swarming down the topgallant backstay, bleeding and grinning.

There was something more in it than the mere prospect of getting five shillings—a silver crown—for the capture of the bird, which made the boy stick to it and called forth all his grit and determination. It was the golden crown of victory against what seemed long odds that he sought and won, to the admiration of his shipmates; for it was a tough and plucky fight in its small way.

The owl was a magnificent bird, almost snow-white, with some small spots on his head and back. I have never seen anything like him, before or since, either at the Zoological Gardens or wild. He had an enormous head and great yellow eyes, and when he opened his mouth I felt sure I could have put my closed fist into it, though I felt no great inclination to do so.

The same day, just before sunset, another owl, exactly similar to the first one, flew on board, alighted in the fore-rigging, and was easily captured by one of the seamen; and our doctor—who was our acknowledged authority on natural history—pronounced the two birds to be splendid individuals of a rare species, and worth a lot of money.

On our arrival at Halifax the parson magnanimously presented his owl to a zoological society in that city, and it soon became known that there was another similar bird on board the *Ariadne*, which was up for sale to the highest bidder.

We were lying alongside the wharf, taking in stores and provisions, and several would-be purchasers came to inspect the owl and make offers

for him. The owner, with visions of such riches as would afford him and his chums a rousing spree, was showing off the beautiful bird. He had made fast about ten fathoms of fishing-line round one of his legs, and was allowing him to take short flights, to show the spread of his great wings to an admiring crowd. The bidding was brisk, and, to the best of my recollection, was well above twenty dollars (£4), when the end of the line slipped out of the man's fingers and the owl soared aloft and rapidly disappeared over the hills, homeward bound, with the fishing-line still on his leg, which no doubt he pecked off at his leisure.

A shout of heartless laughter went up from all save the owner, or rather the late owner, whose face was a study and who used bad words.

Halifax was a paradise after the Gulf of Mexico. Dances, picnics, fishing, cricket, and all sorts of amusements in a bracing climate, to restore our jaded constitutions.

In the sixties cricket was still the great naval game. It had not yet been ousted by vulgar, boisterous football; and most ships had an officers' eleven, though occasionally one or two of the men were included, if they showed exceptional ability and kept sober after a victory. In the *Ariadne* we played all officers and won most of our matches; so that we were very proud of ourselves and challenged everybody we came across. It was a rather curious eleven, for there were only two bowlers, and if either of these broke down we were done, for there was no change; but these two bowlers were deadly and very seldom did break down, and on one notable occasion one

of them (Charles Reade, midshipman) took four wickets—clean bowled—in four consecutive balls, which was a remarkable performance, even in naval cricket.

One peculiarity of our team was that our batting was indifferent and we never made anything like a big score; but our fielding was very smart—though "Point" says so—and we never let our opponents make a score either. Their most famous bats, "good for 50," used to be knocked out one after the other for duck's eggs, much to their astonishment.

We played one very remarkable match, which I think deserves recording: for although cricket is proverbially full of surprises, this was certainly the most surprising that I ever took part in or looked on at. It took place at Bermuda, where there was a large squadron lying, consisting of the flagship *Nile* and seven other ships besides the *Ariadne*. We had beaten the flagship soundly and also every other ship that was worth playing; so, in the zenith of pride, we conceived the audacious idea of challenging the whole fleet. This we did, and a match was duly arranged, between our marine officer, who was captain of our eleven, and the parson of the flagship, who, as captain of her eleven, selected the strongest team he could find from the squadron of seven ships then present.

The fateful day arrived, and all Burmuda turned out to see those "bumptious" *Ariadnes* get a good licking. His Excellency the Governor, the admiral, and all the élite of the islands, naval, military, and civil, and the band of the flagship

to add to the attraction; but unfortunately they saw nothing of the match, as they did not arrive till after lunch, and the match was finished before even the band appeared upon the ground.

As it was to be a two-innings match and to be played off in one day, we began rather early—about eleven o'clock.

We won the toss and went in first, and were all dismissed in about half an hour, for a total of 22 runs. The fleet eleven smiled and chaffed and took their time about going to the wickets; but when they did go there they did not stay long, for in about a quarter of an hour the whole side was out for a total of 11 runs, four of the "good for 50" men being clean bowled by Mr. Midshipman Reade with four consecutive balls. The enemy looked blue, but said it was a fluke and that this sort of thing could not happen again: so after an interval and the usual talk about the uncertainties of cricket, our side took the field again and their side went to the wickets, as the rule at this date was that if one side failed to make half the score of their opponents they had to follow their innings.

This time the debacle was even worse than their first innings, for the whole eleven was disposed of for 8 runs; and when the Governor, the admiral, the captains, the ladies, and the band of music arrived, they found us playing leap-frog and tip-and-run.

It was certainly a very remarkable match, even for naval cricket; the score being—*Ariadne* 22, Fleet 11 and 8. We had therefore beaten them in one innings with 3 runs to spare. I wrote a

"poem" about this match, something in the style of the "Iliad"; but I did not publish it, as it would probably have called forth a counterblast from the flagship's poets. Perhaps a paraphrase of Bon Gaultier—

> "By heavens! thou shalt not twist our names
> Into thy verses vile,
> Nor mimic in thy puny song
> The thunders of the Nile."

So they were denied the pleasure of hearing "hoarse Fitzgerald bawl his creaking couplets in the tavern hall," and also the sweet consolation of a repartee.

It may be believed that we were not a little proud of ourselves; and if we had been in England we should probably have challenged M.C.C. and Ground.

But alas! pride goeth before a fall; and it was not long after this that on our return to Halifax we were challenged and most ignominiously defeated by a school of small boys, not one of whom had yet shed his childish voice; and I have still ringing in my ears the sound of that shrill, exultant cheer, from the whole school, which greeted the fall of our last wicket, leaving the small boys with a substantial lead.

On this occasion one of our two bowlers broke down completely, and the doctor's and my lobs were sent flying about the field to all the thirty-two points of the compass, much to the school-boys' delight; and the moral effect of this defeat was so depressing that I don't think we ever quite recovered from it.

## CHAPTER XI

The North American waters—Sail *versus* steam—Snipe and alligators in Jamaica—Pot-hunting—"Man overboard!"—Home again—Sheerness—Some reflections on naval discipline—The *Ariadne* is paid off.

I SPENT seven consecutive years on the North American and West Indian station (1861–8), with a short break of about three months in England while the *Ariadne* was paying off and the *Cordelia* commissioning. It was an interesting station during these years, which included the American Civil War, the Jamaica rebellion, and the Fenian raids on the border between the United States and Canada; and the ships that got a fair share of the northern division found it a very pleasant station.

Of course all our cruising and most of our passages—unless there was some very urgent business in hand—were made under sail; and it is curious now to look back upon the craze for economy in the use of coal which possessed our Admiralty at this time: and woe betide the captain who got up steam without some very good reason for doing so.

The following Admiralty circular of about this date shows the estimation in which steam engines were held by our rulers:—

"My Lords desire to call the attention of all officers in command of Her Majesty's ships to Circular 177, as well as to the orders which have been given from time to time respecting the expenditure of coals, and to impress upon them the necessity that exists for working their ships without the aid of steam, when the duty required can and ought to be performed under sail alone, not only on the score of economy, but for the important purpose of ensuring the efficiency of screw ships as sailing ships."

With this circular hanging over their heads and a wholesome fear of incurring "My Lords'" displeasure, captains were very shy about getting up steam; and although no doubt the restriction on the use of coal may have maintained the efficiency of screw ships as sailing ships—whatever this may have been worth as a fighting asset in a war navy—it is quite certain that it turned out to be penny wise, pound foolish, for it was directly responsible for the loss of quite a considerable number of Her Majesty's ships, notably that of a splendid new line-of-battle ship, a 101-gun two-decker, the *Conqueror*, which drifted ashore on Rum Quay (ominous name!) under sail and became a total wreck, because the captain economized a few tons of coal and failed to get up steam in time. The *Conqueror* was worth about £150,000, which would have paid for a lot of coal.

There can be no doubt that the sails were a splendid school of education for both officers and men. In the officers they called for great vigilance, alertness, sound judgment, prompt

decision, and steady nerves; and in the petty officers and seamen, for physical agility, grit and daring of a very high order. To see half a dozen topgallant-yard men struggling to furl a topgallant sail which had been carried too long in a rising gale by a foolhardy officer was a sight which no man could fail to admire.

Captains varied a good deal in their ideas about "carrying on" in a rising breeze. Some were over-cautious and were universally despised, especially by the men, who were not at all averse to showing their shipmates how they could tackle a tough job aloft. Other captains, again, were reckless even to foolhardiness, and seemed to care little what risks they ran so long as they could gain a reputation for "carrying on" and "not being afraid," which was not specially praiseworthy, seeing that they had not to go aloft themselves to furl the split sail or shift the broken spar.

The really fine seaman, of whom there were not a few amongst the captains I served under, seemed to know by a sort of instinct the right moment to shorten sail: not a minute too soon, not a minute too late.

It was never considered bad seamanship to carry away a studding-sail boom when making the most of a fair wind; but to carry away a topgallant mast or to spring a yard or a topmast, was usually dubbed a lubberly job, and was, in point of fact, nearly always the result of bad seamanship or inexcusable recklessness.

The sails died hard in the navy, and we who were brought up under them, and realized what a splendid and incomparable institution they were

for developing all the finest and manliest characteristics of the British seaman, were very sorry to see them go; but bitterly as we regretted the change, to sailless ships, some of us were cruelly called traitors and renegades because we threw over our early love and strenuously urged the abolition of sails from all our ironclads when it became obvious that they were not only a useless and expensive appendage but that they interfered seriously with fighting efficiency; and I am not ashamed to admit that I was amongst the traitors.

It is difficult to fathom what could have been in the minds of the men who rigged the *Inflexible* of 1875—a low-freeboard turret ship, with four 80-ton guns and twenty-four inches of armour on her side, or rather on part of her side: and this, too, was after the *Captain* had capsized in the Bay of Biscay—another low-freeboard turret ship with tripod masts and a full spread of canvas.

Truly the sails died hard; yet, in justice to our naval architects, it must be admitted that it was not their fault that sails and rigging remained for many years as part of the equipment of warships of all classes, to hamper their movements and interfere seriously with their fighting efficiency. Happily, other nations followed our lead, so it was not of much consequence; but it was the sailors, and not the naval architects, who were responsible for this piece of ultra-conservatism; and it was not until the present Sir William White and Admiral Hopkins assumed command of the Admiralty workshop that the sails received their final quietus. Fine seaman though Hopkins was, he could see a little beyond the next lamp-post, and

had faith—since well justified—that Vulcan could step into Neptune's sea-boots, though many of his contemporaries prophesied the downfall of the British Navy when once our ships were unrigged and the school of the sails lost. Small blame to them that they could not foresee the nerve-training which was shortly to be afforded with the advent of T.B.D.'s manœuvring in close order at twenty knots, submarines, and air scouts.

I believe it has ever been the custom for old sailors, at *all* periods of naval history, to lament the good old times and the "modern" decay of seamanship; but that is no reason why I should inflict upon the reader any more lamentations or dirges.

To return to the West Indies. I have some delightful recollections of the island of Jamaica. Not exactly of Port Royal harbour, where I spent a good deal of my time, but of romantic rides in the mountains, sometimes with charming companions; and invariably with a very hearty welcome from the hospitable planters, notwithstanding that at this time they were passing through a most disastrous financial depression for the honour and glory of free trade in sugar. We used to hear how "a few years ago" sugar fetched £60 a ton, and "now" they were glad to get £20. Yet the traditional hospitality of the Jamaica planters was held so sacred that these kind-hearted people were always ready to kill the fatted calf to entertain visitors, especially sailors, and if they hadn't got a calf they'd kill their only pig or their only laying hen.

We used to ride about the island with saddle-

bags as our sole luggage, and one had only to get a letter of introduction to the first planter out of Kingston—just to say who you were—dine and sleep there, and he would pass you on to another planter, and so on all round the island, making certain of a warm welcome and the very best they could give you.

It was a delightful way of seeing the most beautiful island in the West Indies. The scenery in the highlands of Jamaica is magnificent, and the change for the sun-baked sailor, from a stuffy little cabin on board a ship in Port Royal harbour, with the thermometer at 80°, to a large airy bedroom, with the thermometer at 65°, was a joy to be long remembered.

Fifty years ago there was only one short railway in Jamaica and very few roads for wheel traffic; practically speaking none, in the most beautiful parts of the highlands. Even the military station at Newcastle, 4,000 feet above the sea, had no carriage road to it, only a bridle-path, and that a very steep one. But this made a cruise in the mountains all the more enjoyable, as there was no noise and no dust, and the crisp mountain air laden with the fragrant odours of the rich tropical and sub-tropical vegetation, the cultivated valleys, the rugged sides of the jungle-covered mountains, the beautiful banana-plant with its long green satin leaves, the graceful tree-ferns, and the stately cabbage-palms afforded a grateful change of scene from the smell of pitch and tar, and the noise, dust, and sweat of Port Royal dockyard, where old Van invariably put me in charge of the working party, as he said he could trust me to hunt them

and keep them from idling—a compliment, no doubt, though one that I should have been happy to share with some of my brother-lieutenants, though perhaps I should have been wrong, as old Van was a good friend to me, and always "gave me a chance" whenever there was anything extra and out-of-the-way to be done, which relieved the monotony of harbour watch-keeping.

There is not much sport to be had in the West Indies, though I remember on one occasion getting ten couple of snipe before breakfast at a place called Savanna-la-Mar, in the west end of the island. He is a true cosmopolitan, the snipe. I have shot him in Syria, in Albania, in Spain, in Canada, in the Falkland Islands, in China, in Japan, in Ceylon, in Jamaica, and in the bogs of my native land; and he is the same sporting bird wherever you meet him, wildest in the United Kingdom, tamest in North China, where he only flies about a hundred yards and then alights again, so that you can go on till you get him—if you have ammunition enough.

One day I was shooting snipe in Jamaica in a marshy field where there were cattle grazing. I had bagged three or four couple and was looking round for the next likely place, which appeared to be a very green-looking spot on the far side of a stout post-and-rail fence, near the bank of a small, sluggish stream.

I was just about to step over the fence when it occurred to me that the ground beyond looked suspiciously green even for Jamaica, and on closer examination I could see that it was "all afloat"—in other words, that it was water with a mass of

very green vegetation floating on the top of it; so I then realized that if I had got over the fence and taken a step or two beyond it I should probably have gone in over my head and lost my gun. But I had still further reason to congratulate myself that I looked before I leaped, for just before turning away to retrace my steps I saw something which looked like a log of wood, almost completely immersed, about ten or fifteen yards on the far side of the fence. The log, however, moved without any apparent reason, and then I saw that it was the head of an alligator, with very little more than the tip of his snout and one eye showing, so I took a steady rest over the top rail and let fly two barrels of snipe-shot at his eye. There was a great upheaval and commotion in the pond, almost as great as when the snapping turtle swallowed Philip Slingsby and—

> "Like a mighty steamship foundering
> Down the monstrous vision sank,
> And the ripple, slowly rolling,
> Plashed and played upon the bank.
>
> Still and stiller grew the waters,
> Hushed the canes within the brake;
> There was but a kind of coughing
> At the bottom of the lake."

I waited and watched for some time, but failed even to catch the sound of a kind of coughing at the bottom of the lake, such as had greeted the ears of Cullen Bryant after the snapping turtle had disappeared with Slingsby inside him. So I then went on with my snipe shooting, and saw no more of the alligator, though I must admit that

when I fired snipe-shot at an alligator I did not feel quite certain as to what he would do, and I was prepared to make a rapid strategic movement to the rear.

On the following morning I had to return to my ship, but I got a letter about a week afterwards from the friend with whom I had been staying to say that a dead alligator, about fourteen feet long, had been found by the herd in the field where the cattle were grazing, not far from the spot where I fired my shot.

On the shores of that El Dorado of the buccaneers, known as the Spanish Main, lies the city of Santa Marta, not far from the mouth of the great Magdalena River. It is a sleepy, evil-smelling, unattractive, Spanish-American town, and we visited it several times in the *Ariadne*, presumably for political reasons.

Most of these towns on the Spanish Main seemed to be afflicted with chronic yellow fever—what the doctors call "endemic"—so that it was impossible to give leave to the men at any of them; and even the officers avoided the towns as much as possible, and sought exercise and diversion in the surrounding country, which, however, was mostly jungle, though sometimes very beautiful jungle. In some places it was so thick that it was only possible to get through it by cutting a way with a machête, while in others it was more open, with magnificent trees rearing their great trunks to a height of a hundred feet without a leaf, and then spreading out in a rich foliage, so thick as to make twilight in the forest at noonday; the trunks of the trees being

often adorned with various creepers, covered with gorgeous, many-tinted blossoms. But no pen of mine can do justice to the beauty of these Central American forests, and I must refer the reader to that delightful book, Charles Kingsley's "At Last," where he will find such a fascinating description of these tropical forests that he will never be happy until he sees them.

We got some shooting at Santa Marta—a very curious kind of shooting, which some ultra-fastidious people will probably deny me the right to call "sport," as we shot the birds on the ground! It was pot-hunting, pure and unadulterated; but I have already ventured the remark in a previous chapter that pot-hunting is the very essence of sport, and that unless you are shooting for the pot you don't realize the meaning of the word "sport."

We used to call the birds "quail," though I believe their proper name is Virginian partridge. They are a little bigger than quail, and they have a tuft on the top of their heads, and are very good eating.

Some little distance from the town of Santa Marta there were several patches of cultivated land; they were like oases in the primeval forest; and on these the birds fed in great numbers between the first streak of dawn and the time that the sun rose above the tops of the tall trees. We used, therefore, to land about an hour before dawn and make our way in the dark as best we could, so as to get to the cultivated patches just as the day was breaking, and then, as soon as it was light enough to distinguish

objects thirty or forty yards off, the stalk began—one barrel on the ground, and the second barrel as the birds rose, right into the brown of them; and as they were generally in large coveys and fed close together, we sometimes got seven or eight with one shot, and thus made some good pot-hunting bags of very good birds that we could not have got in any other way, as the natives never seemed to trouble them.

Several times we tried following the birds into the forest, but it was quite useless, and we never got another sight of them once they were off the cultivated land.

There is another kind of pot-hunting sport which is peculiar to the Central American forests; but this is on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. The quarry is the chachalaca, a bird about the size of a small turkey, and excellent eating. You don't shoot him on the ground, because you never get a shot at him there; but you do shoot him sitting in a tree.

The bird is also known as the Texan quan, and dogs are useful for this chase. The dogs find them and put them up, and they fly into one of the tall forest trees and perch there. The dogs then bark excitedly at the foot of the tree and the bird replies by calling out "Chachalaca! chachalaca! chachalaca!" with all his might, apparently in defiance of the dogs, or as much as to say, "Sold again," or, "You haven't got me yet"; but whatever the cry means in bird language, the continued repetition of it costs the silly bird his life; for if he only sat tight and held his tongue, the chances would be about

a hundred to one that you would never be able to locate him or get a sight of him amongst the thick foliage of the tropical forest; but as he continues to call out "Chachalaca!," as long as the dogs bark, you can generally manage to sight him after some difficulty; and as he is badly wanted for the pot, down he comes with a thud; and then you must get at him before the dogs do, else these hungry tykes would make short work of him, for they also are hunting for the pot.

I fear the readers of the *Pink 'Un*, and other orthodox sportsmen of that type, will dub me an arrant poacher for making such admissions. Well, I must acknowledge that I have always had a sneaking regard for the poacher; and I am not sure that he is not the true sportsman, as he is hunting for something that he really wants—bird, beast, or fish—for himself and his family. Moreover, as he is not only hunting, but hunted, he has a double excitement, which must add to the sport.

He is, of course, breaking the law; but then he argues that the law is an unjust one and that wild animals, birds or fishes are the property of any one who likes to kill them, and that if they are not wild, but tame, and preserved, there is no sport in killing them. The argument that if there were no game laws there would not be a pheasant, partridge, deer, or salmon in the United Kingdom in ten years' time does not appeal to him, as he would then find some other business, such as house-breaking or henroost-robbing, in imitation of one of his country's distinguished lawmakers.

As I cannot claim to be a professor of ethics, I will not pursue the argument farther; though I well remember being struck with the simple logic of a reply made to me on one occasion by a notorious poacher in Co. Donegal, when I remonstrated with him on his acknowledgment of a method of salmon-poaching which even I in my direst extremity would have hesitated to adopt. He thought for a moment, as if he was a little bit ashamed of himself, and then said sadly, "Shure, the family must live."

And now that we have had a good spell on shore, and indulged in various kinds of sport, from quails to alligators, it is time to return to the sea and the *Ariadne*.

Fifty years ago Her Majesty's ships used to do a good deal of "trooping," which is now performed by merchant-steamers. Thus on one occasion the *Ariadne* carried a battery of artillery from Pictou to Quebec; and I find the following entry in the journal (October 29, 1862): "Embarked 4th Battery Royal Artillery, consisting of 161 rank and file, 9 sergeants, 7 officers, 19 women and 30 children." These we landed at Quebec. And then (November 7th): "Embarked 4 officers, 108 men, 74 women, and 148 children of the Royal Canadian Rifles" (*sic*). And then (November 9th): "Anna Madden, wife of James Madden, private R.C.R., was delivered of a female child." Poor Anna Madden! she must have had a rough time on board a man-of-war in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the month of November; though, if I remember right, our kind-hearted assistant surgeon gave up his cabin for the event; and no doubt the young lady was

in due time christened Ariadne. We landed the Royal Canadian Rifles, with their 148 children, at St. John's, Newfoundland, where I hope they are now all flourishing as good and loyal subjects of our gracious king.

During the American Civil War there was a big business done in blockade-running between Nasau in the Bahama Islands and Wilmington, and some other ports in the possession of the Southerners. It was a risky but very profitable game, if you got through with a cargo.

Special, very fast, shallow-draught, paddle-wheel steamers were built on the Clyde for this purpose, and several of these were commanded by British naval officers, some of whom rose to distinction in our navy afterwards. Murray Aynsley was one, and Hobart (who afterwards became Hobart Pasha) was another, and I think the late Sir William Hewett, V.C., and Captain Burgoyne, who was lost in the *Captain*, were others; but of the two last I am not sure. Of course if any of these officers had been caught by the Federal cruisers which were blockading Southern ports they would have been repudiated by our Government, for they were guilty of a breach of the neutrality declaration issued by Her Majesty; but the offer of the command of a blockade-runner, with a large share of the profits if successful, must have been very tempting to an adventurous young commander on half-pay, who probably enjoyed the risks and the excitement as much as the prospective profits.

I remember hearing that Hobart, whose acquaintance I made some time afterwards at

Constantinople, had at one time made about £20,000, but went once too often and lost all.

Boots, leather accoutrements, and all munitions of war were in great demand in the Southern States; and I also remember hearing that quinine was three guineas an ounce. So that blockade-running must have been an immensely profitable business.

To run a cargo in—even if you never got out again—must have cleared all expenses and made a handsome profit; but if you could get out with a cargo of cotton, the profits were, of course, still larger; for those who are old enough will remember the cotton famine and the great distress caused in Manchester by the American Civil War, and the high prices which ruled for raw cotton, the Southern States being almost the only source of supply: so that the sympathy—not only the sentimental, but also the business sympathy—of England was with the Southerners.

The Northerners had, practically speaking, what is called "command of the sea"; that is to say, the Southerners were in no position to come out and fight a battle to raise the blockade of their coast. But, on the other hand, the Northern navy was not sufficiently powerful or ubiquitous to prevent the *Alabama* and other Southern commerce-destroyers from effecting such depredations amongst the foreign-going mercantile marine of the Northern States—entirely composed of sailing ships—as to sweep the Stars and Stripes from every ocean. And although Great Britain afterwards handed over a nice little sum of £2,000,000 as compensation for allowing the *Alabama* to

escape from a British port, the United States have never recovered the share of ocean commerce which they then lost.

And now we must take the *Ariadne* home and pay her off, else I shall never be able to give the reader a cruise in all my ships, in the space at my disposal.

We sailed from Bermuda—homeward bound—on February 13, 1864, and directly we were clear of the islands we got a westerly gale to speed us on our way to old England, which was very nice, so far as helping us along went; but our decks had not been caulked for a long time, and the change of climate from the Caribbean Sea to the North Atlantic, together with the heavy rolling of the ship, caused the seams to open; and as the decks were "all afloat," the water poured into our cabins in streams. I made a duck-tent to go over my bed, and this kept out a good deal of it. Some of my messmates slept in oilskins, but that did not look comfortable, and I thought the tent was better. No doubt we grumbled more or less, yet I don't suppose we were worse off than soldiers campaigning. My messmate, George Boyes, got a bad attack of rheumatic fever, and suffered agonies from the rolling of the ship; yet I could do little towards nursing or helping him, as his illness put the lieutenants in three watches, and thus gave us but little spare time.

However, in spite of all our discomfort, we had the consolation to think that we were nearing home at the rate of between two and three hundred miles a day, and that it could not last

long, if only the westerly wind would hold; and it did hold until we had arrived within about three hundred miles of the Scilly Isles, when, like a flash, it chopped round to the eastward and blew with equal strength from that quarter; so that we took a week to do this last three hundred miles of our voyage.

It was during this easterly gale that I had one of the most exciting experiences of my life, in an open boat in a gale of wind in the Atlantic.

A few years ago I was asked to contribute an essay to a book entitled "Unwritten Laws and Ideals," which embraced such professions as the Army, the Navy, the Church, the Law, the medical profession, and many others, and I found myself in some very distinguished company. The navy was, of course, the subject allotted to me, and I propose to describe the incident alluded to above by quoting from my own essay, which I trust will not be regarded as an act of piracy.

The reader will perhaps forgive the attempt to give a sort of dramatic touch to the language in which I described the unwritten law of picking up a lifebuoy whenever it had been let go:—

"*Scene*: North Atlantic, in the month of March; an easterly gale blowing; one of our finest wooden frigates under triple-reefed topsails and reefed courses, struggling to get to the eastward. Time, 2.30 p.m., and the wardroom officers just about to sit down to dinner.

"Cry, 'Man overboard!'—an exciting cry at any time, but under the above circumstances peculiarly so.

"'Hands shorten sail!' Officers and men rush

on deck; the courses are hauled up, the main topsails backed, and the ship hove to. And now comes the critical and all-important question, Will the captain lower a boat? The lifebuoy has been let go, and there is a tradition, an ideal, an unwritten law, that if the lifebuoy has been let go it ought to be picked up again; but there is a heavy sea running, and to lower a boat in such weather is to risk the lives of fourteen or fifteen men on the off-chance of saving one: yet there is a strong feeling, an unwritten law, that it is mean and discreditable not to make an effort to save a shipmate who has had the misfortune to fall overboard. The ship is hove to, the boat—a 12-oared cutter—is manned, the men stationed to lower her are standing by the falls, the midshipman of the boat and one of the lieutenants are in the stern sheets, and the latter takes the helm, as the proper coxswain is absent (and is promptly disrated next morning).

"And now the decision rests with the captain. Will he lower the boat? Is it worth the risk? He is a splendid seaman, a man of iron nerve; but there is a nasty short, steep sea running, such as always accompanies an easterly gale in the Atlantic, and the ship—a large frigate—is rolling her main-deck guns into the water.

"The captain hesitates for a moment, and then gives the order, 'Lower away the lifeboat!' This is cleverly done; the boat takes the water, the falls are let go at the right moment, the tackles smartly unhooked, and the boat gets clear of the ship without accident, and pulls away to windward in the

direction of the lifebuoy. It is an anxious time for those in the boat, as she has to encounter some ugly, curling, breaking seas, which threaten to swamp her, and would do so if they caught her broadside on; but the helmsman is an experienced boatman,* and he dodges the seas, always keeping the boat's bows on to any particularly threatening-looking curler, and thus makes his way slowly to the lifebuoy and picks it up; but alas! there is no man on it, and as the seat that the man was sitting on when he was washed overboard is also picked up, there can be no doubt that the poor fellow has been drowned; so there is nothing for the boat to do now but to return to the ship. But this is not such an easy matter; far more difficult and dangerous than it was to get her up to windward where she now is; for she will first have to turn round and pass through the critical position of 'broadside on,' and then run before the sea, which is more dangerous than heading it, as she is a square-sterned boat, and therefore more liable to be pooped than a boat of whaleboat build; but the helmsman watches his opportunity, gets the boat round successfully, and steers for the ship, dodging the seas as best he can.

"Frequently the boat and the ship lose sight of each other as they pass through the trough of the seas; and those on board the ship are very anxious, probably far more anxious than those in the boat, as the latter have the excitement and

* I took the liberty of describing myself as an experienced boatman, as I was brought up in boats from my earliest childhood, and could row a small oar and sail a small boat almost as soon as I could walk.

elation which always attach to any service with a spice of danger in it; whereas the former feel their utter helplessness to do anything but look on.

"The captain, as has been said, was a man of iron nerve, and those who knew him best and had been in some tight places with him had never before seen him perturbed; but on this occasion he showed great anxiety and was quite unable to maintain his accustomed sang-froid, asking frequent questions of the men aloft—'Can you see the boat? What is she doing? Has she picked up the lifebuoy? Is she coming back?' and finally going up the mizen rigging himself, in order that he might keep sight of her; but the 'sweet little cherub that sits up aloft to keep watch o'er the life of poor Jack' has his eye on that boat, and brings her safely back to the ship.

"The excitement is not over yet, however, for the boat has to be hoisted up, and that is no easy matter in such a sea, with the ship labouring heavily and rolling her main-deck guns, and sometimes her main-chains, into the water. It would, of course, be possible for the men to scramble into the ship and abandon the boat, and this is sometimes done on such occasions; but there is an unwritten law which says that if it is in the power of British seamen to save the boat it ought to be done, and there are always men ready to volunteer to hook the boat on if the captain will allow them to try; and on this occasion he does allow them, though it very nearly costs them their lives; for when the boat is about half-way up the ship gives a sudden and heavy lurch to

windward which dashes the boat against the ship's side, smashing in half a dozen of her planks severely hurting two of the men in her, and throwing two others overboard. Preparation has, however, been made for this eventuality: a dozen ropes, with a bowline knot at the end of each of them, are already dangling over the lee quarter, and after an anxious five minutes the two men overboard are fished up and hauled on board, the remnants of the boat are hoisted up and secured, the two injured men (one with three ribs broken) are attended by the surgeon, and thus ends an exciting incident in the cruise of one of Her Majesty's ships."

In describing the event as above for the volume of "Unwritten Laws and Ideals" all names were, for obvious reasons, suppressed; though the reader will, of course, understand that the ship was the *Ariadne*, the captain was Vansittart, and I was the lieutenant who had the good fortune to find the coxswain's post vacant; though I am not quite sure that I should have allowed him to steer if he had been there, for I have always been obsessed with the vain conceit that I can steer a boat better than anybody else: and when all is said and done, a certain measure of self-confidence is better than doubt and hesitation when you find yourself in a tight place, especially if your conceit is not entirely founded upon the "valour of ignorance."

Many years after this I met my old captain in the hall of the United Service Club. He was then a very old man and obviously failing

fast, both physically and mentally. I saw he did not recognize me, so I accosted him with, "You don't remember me, sir, I'm afraid." He looked hard at me for a moment from under his shaggy eyebrows, and then said, "I can't remember your name, but you are the young lieutenant who went away in the boat to try and pick the man up; and by Jove! if you had not been able to handle a boat you'd all have been drowned."

Then he thought again for a moment, and the scene appeared to come back to his memory, and he added, in an apologetic tone: "I never would have lowered the boat at all, ye know, only that I saw the man's cap on the water."

Old Van died a year or two after this, and I never saw him again, but his commanding figure, his imperious voice, his prompt decisions, splendid self-confidence, and fine seamanship are memories of the sea which can never be effaced.

Four or five years afterwards the *Ariadne* lost a boat's crew of twelve men and two officers not far from the same spot and under somewhat similar circumstances; though according to all accounts the weather was not nearly so bad, as the ship was carrying topgallant sails at the time: but it was said that there was lack of good seamanship on the part of the captain on this occasion, and the "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" must have been asleep or off duty.

It took us another week to get to Plymouth —only about 300 miles—after the incident related

above. The hard easterly wind continued, and there was too much sea to steam against it, even with our 800 horse power (now our big cruisers have 70,000!). Besides which, to the best of my recollection we had very little coal on board, as we had not filled up at Bermuda, expecting westerly winds and not wishing to have all the labour of getting out a lot of coal before paying off; for in the old days a ship had to be emptied of everything before the crew were dismissed. However, we got to Plymouth at last, laid in a stock of fresh bread and butter and Devonshire cream, and then went on to Sheerness to pay off.

Fifty years ago Sheerness was generally declared by naval officers to be the most God-forsaken place on the face of the earth. There was no railway to it, and the only way of getting at it was by crazy little paddle-steamers from Chatham. The town itself was mostly composed of wooden hovels built of dockyard chips; for in the old days—the very old days—the shipwrights were allowed to carry out of the dockyards, when they went home at night, the chips they had made during the day—partly to clear up the litter round the building slips and partly as perquisites, for firewood; but this indulgence had to be stopped, as it was found that they made an abnormal amount of chips, quite out of proportion to the finished article, and that the chips got to be bigger and bigger, until at last they were able to build houses with them. And thus it came about that the district known as "Blue Town," where most of the dockyard workmen lived, was

a collection of clinker-built houses built of dockyard chips; the term "clinker" or "lapstrake," indicating, in technical language, that method of boat-building most commonly in use where one plank laps over the next one.

The *Ariadne* was not allowed to go alongside the dockyard to strip and return her gear, although there was plenty of room, but was moored to a buoy in the harbour, half a mile from the dockyard, as this was in accordance with red-tape and was certain to cause the greatest amount of inconvenience and involve the largest amount of labour for the crew; and I really think the stripping of that ship was the bitterest time I ever had in my life.

It was the month of March, and very cold, especially for us after the West Indies. The wind kept hard in the east. It rained a good deal, and when it didn't rain it snowed or froze. We couldn't get the sails dry, and we couldn't get the yards down until the sails were dry. This delayed us considerably, as the dockyard authorities would not receive the sails until they were quite dry.

The ship had to be emptied. Guns, ammunition, stores, coal, even the water-tanks taken out, cleaned and returned to the victualling yard. She also had to be "stripped to a gantline," which means that every bit of standing and running rigging had to be unrove, jagged up, docketted, and returned to the dockyard. All spars except the actual lower masts had to be launched over the side and towed on shore by rowboats: as there were no steam launches in those days and we were

Looking back now upon this time after a lapse of near fifty years, it is still puzzling to understand what use there could be, from a Service point of view, in making that ship strip and clear out in the tideway instead of going alongside the yard where there was plenty of room for her, and the work could have been done in about half the time. Probably it was in accordance with an unwritten law or an ideal of a bygone age: at any rate it gave us a vast amount of extra work, and no leave was given to either officers or men while a ship was preparing to pay off. This was certainly wise so far as the men were concerned, as there would have been but little chance of their turning up sober and ready for work next morning.

Nobody who has the good of the Service at heart would like to revert to the harsh methods by which we maintained discipline in the navy fifty years ago; though it may be open to doubt whether we are not now going to the other extreme by pampering and coddling our seamen a little too much.

We don't want the navy manned with tame cats and domesticated spaniels, but with hardy seamen, who think more of their ship and their duty than of getting on shore to their wives and families every second night when the ship is in harbour. No doubt one of the great difficulties which a commanding officer now has to contend with arises from the fact that five-sixths of our fighting ships are kept hanging around the coasts of Great Britain, and all hands with one eye on the shore and the other on the ship.

In former days we never used to think we could *begin* to get our ships into real proper order until we were clear of the home ports and well out in blue water, on our way to the Mediterranean or some other station. Yet the present unsatisfactory state of affairs must continue so long as the country is guilty of the insensate folly of encouraging a few patriotic and zealous amateurs to play at soldiering in their spare time, instead of providing itself with a national army, by making every man do his duty.

The "naval discontent," which we are now beginning to hear about, is largely due to the fact that our ships are too much in the home ports and the men get married, and then find that their pay is not sufficient to support a wife and family, which it never was intended to be.

Marriage may be very good for their morals, but what we want is fighting efficiency and not goody-goody tame cats, brought up on jam and "soft tack," who make a great fuss if they are not allowed to spend Christmas Day in the bosom of their families.

In former days we generally found it better for discipline to spend Christmas Day at sea if we could manage it. Of course the men grumbled more or less—it is one of their privileges to do so—though they knew in their hearts it was good for them. And that reminds me of an old song that used to be rather popular on the fo'c'sle. It was the lament of a lady who was expecting her sweetheart to spend Christmas Day with her, instead of which the port-admiral sent his

ship to sea. The chorus verse was always sung with great gusto—

> "And you've sent his ship in a gale of wind,
> On a lee shore to be jammed;
> I'll give you a bit of my mind, old hunks:
> Port-admiral, you be damned!"

And now I must return to the *Ariadne*, pay her off, and take a last fond farewell of her and of my shipmates, with none of whom did I ever serve again.

At the end of three weeks' hard work in rain, wind, frost and snow we had the ship cleared out and stripped, and we were *then* taken alongside the dockyard to pay off, with nothing left standing but the lower masts; and right glad we were to find ourselves free, and to get away from Sheerness as soon as possible.

I had not been quite three years a lieutenant, and as there was no full-pay leave for commissioned officers in those days, I went on shore on half-pay, or what was called half-pay, which in my case was 4s. a day; though, as my full pay had been 10s. a day, I discovered that the arithmetic of my grateful country was different from that which I had been taught at school.

However, it was enough to pay for my washing, and I had plenty of kind friends to offer me a hearty welcome, and after spending a very happy three months on shore I was appointed first lieutenant of the *Cordelia*, fitting out at Plymouth.

## CHAPTER XII

H.M.S. *Cordelia*—Spearing, playing, and hunting turtle in the Gulf of Mexico—Fishing at night—Chasing a pirate schooner —Devil-fish—Hayti and H.M.S. *Bulldog*—The Jamaica Rebellion of 1865—Duck-shooting.

THE *Cordelia* was what sailors elegantly call a " bug-trap " (and she became one literally on more than one occasion during our commission in the West Indies).

A "bug-trap" may be described as a futile attempt of the naval architect to squeeze a quart of naval energy into a pint bottle. It never succeeds, and of late years it seems to have been abandoned, for no one can now accuse our naval architects of being afraid of tonnage.

The *Cordelia* was only a few tons bigger than the old brigs, yet into her were crowded engines, boilers, coal-bunkers, eleven guns, the spars and rigging of a full-rigged ship, twelve officers and a hundred and thirty men; and they sent us trooping! Yes, on one occasion we carried fifty black soldiers, two white sergeants and their wives, a four days' trip, from Jamaica to Belize, and this was one of the occasions upon which the *Cordelia* earned her sobriquet.

She was lying in Plymouth Sound when I

joined her, and I found everybody "waiting for the first lieutenant." It seems that another man had been appointed, but asked to be excused, and then I was appointed, as a sort of afterthought, and thus arrived late upon the scene. I cannot say I was altogether enchanted by the look of the little ship, either inside or out; but I was young for the billet, and consoled myself with the adage, "Better first in a village than second in Rome."

Our wardroom was thirteen feet square and the table in the middle just held the six of us—two lieutenants, the master, two doctors, and the paymaster; and if one of us wanted to ask a friend to dine, some one else had to dine out; but we had a fine big skylight with fresh air and plenty of daylight.

The midshipmen's berth was about eight feet square, and it only had one small scuttle for light and air. There were eight in it originally, three being naval cadets on first entry; but two of the said cadets' fathers who came on board to pay their sons a visit were so horrified at the sight of the "dog-hole" that they went straight up to the Admiralty and got the boys removed before the ship sailed; so that I had only one cadet left to bully, and right well he turned out.

We first went to Halifax, and took a month to get there. This was the *Cordelia's* second commission, and in the interval she had a top-gallant forecastle built on her; but this put her so much out of trim and down by the head that all the bilge water ran forward to the bows

H.M.S. *Cordelia.*
*From a water-colour drawing by the Author.*

instead of coming to the suctions of the pumps, and by the time we got to Halifax you could have smelt us a mile off.

It was fortunate that we did not go straight to the West Indies in that condition, or we should probably have got yellow fever or some other plague. At Halifax we got fifteen tons of ballast and put it in the stern, and this put her in trim again, but spoilt her sailing qualities—if she ever had any.

It was rather a come-down from the *Ariadne* to the *Cordelia*, from the finest frigate afloat to a sloop of 579 tons, just half the size of some of our modern torpedo-boat destroyers. Yet a first lieutenant is a bit of an autocrat in his way, especially if he has an easy-going captain, as I had for the first six months of the commission, while getting the ship in order—as we used to call it—by gilding the trucks and the name on the stern, painting the port-holes vermilion, sticking a gilt arrow in the end of the flying jib-boom, and one or two other little adornments; for Jack likes his ship to look "saucy," and although biologists may be quite right when they tell us that the curl in the pig's tail is of no use to him, and only for ornament, he would certainly look less jaunty if his tail were straight.

We were not given a very long holiday at Halifax, but soon sent down to the old happy hunting-grounds in the West Indies, and before long we found ourselves in the Gulf of Mexico, lying at the usual anchorage under the lee of Sacrificios Island, four miles from the city of

Vera Cruz; but the great international fleet had departed and the Island of Sacrificios had become a French cemetery; so there could be no more digging for Aztec remains, as we should only have dug up Frenchmen.

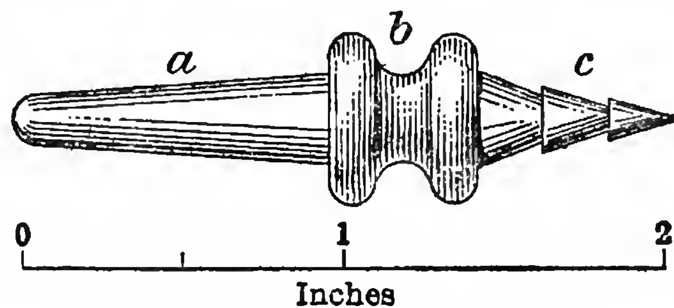
In a former chapter I mentioned that there are plenty of turtle in the Gulf of Mexico, but that we did not know how to catch them when I was there in the *Ariadne*. There were no tracks of them on the shores of the little sandy islets, and they never seemed to come on shore, like they do at Ascension, where they are turned (hence "turn turtle") when they come on shore at night to lay their eggs. Of course only the cows are caught in this way, as the bull never comes on shore; he is not such a fool.

Before going down to Vera Cruz in the *Cordelia* I had made such inquiries and gained such information with regard to pelagic turtling that we were able to catch as many as we wanted for our own use while we were there, and also take back fifty to Jamaica when we returned there and give them away to our friends.

Not only was it very agreeable to be able to vary our diet with turtle soup, turtle steaks, turtle fin, but it was really very fine sport catching them; and as I do not think that many of my readers have ever speared and played a 300-lb. turtle, I will give a somewhat detailed description of how it is done, which those who care nothing for sport may skip.

"Spearing" and "playing" may perhaps sound cruel, so it must be explained that the so-called spearing is painless, as the little steel peg only

sticks into the hard carapace of the turtle, which has no more feeling than the horny part of a horse's hoof, and it is a condition of securing the turtle uninjured, so that he may live in peace until he is wanted for food; that the spear-point must not be more than three-quarters of an inch long, as otherwise it would penetrate the lungs and the creature would bleed to death.




This is the exact size of the spear, which is made of steel. *a* fits loosely into a metal socket at the end of a nine-foot ash shaft. Round *b* the line is spliced; and *c* is the point to be stuck into the shell of the turtle. The rest of the outfit consists of an ash shaft about the thickness of an ordinary boathook staff. Sixty fathoms of line, rather stouter than cod-line, with a buoy on the inboard end of it, to be thrown overboard in case all the line has run out before the boat's head can be pointed in the right direction, though this does not often happen.

The southern shores of the Gulf of Mexico are skirted by numerous coral-reefs, some of them several miles in extent, and in general character these reefs are all more or less alike, the depth of water on them ranging from three to six feet, with a sandy bottom studded with lumps of brain coral; the weather, or seaward, side of the reef being protected by a great bank of coral well

above water, this bank having been piled up by the winter storms; and the result is that with the prevailing wind there is smooth water on the reef.

The turtle lie asleep, or apparently asleep, on the bottom, and as the water is as clear as crystal, they can be seen a good way off, especially if the sun is shining, which it generally is in this country.

The boat we used was a little fourteen-foot skiff with a small sail, and the crew consisted of three, one in the bow with the spear, one at the helm, and one ready to get the mast and sail down and the oars out directly the turtle is struck. It is absolutely necessary that there must be a breeze to ruffle the surface of the water and give the boat steerage way. Many times we tried to approach the turtle in a calm by rowing very gently, or poling with a long pole, but it was useless, for they were always off and away before we could get within striking distance; but under sail we could get right over them and job the little steel peg into the shell before they moved, and then they *did* move. The pace at which these unwieldy-looking creatures can go for a short distance is quite astonishing and difficult to believe unless absolutely seen. The line—neatly coiled in the bottom of the boat—fizzed out and burned one's fingers, while the other two members of the crew were lowering the sail, getting out the oars, and turning the boat's head in the right direction, for the turtle would make his first rush in whichever direction he was facing when struck, and this might be broad on the

beam or even astern; but after a little practice the crew got so smart that it was necessary on the rarest occasions only to throw the buoy over and chase it.

Of course, if the line were checked for an instant while the turtle was running, either the peg would come out or the line would break as surely as if you checked the reel when your salmon was making his first rush; for although the gear is stronger, so also is a 300-lb. turtle stronger and heavier than a 30-lb. salmon.

There was a good deal to be learnt and to remember before we were quite successful in this turtle-hunting campaign. One thing to remember was that it was necessary to pull back the shaft the instant you felt that the peg was in, for if you failed to do this the peg would fall out again at once, the line of impact being altered by the onward motion of the boat; and from this it will be understood that the spear was not thrown, but jobbed, like pig-sticking, and then the haft drawn back quickly.

I really think this turtle-hunting was quite as good sport as any salmon-fishing, and I have always put salmon-fishing second only to hunting, though, of course, the sport was scarcely suitable for middle-aged or elderly people, as will be seen by the following description of a successful hunt:—

The little boat, with its crew of three, has arrived upon the reef, and the little sprit-sail is put up, and we begin to tack to windward slowly. A keen young midshipman is at the helm, the skiff-boy sits in the middle of the boat, and I stand

in the bow with the spear. We never got a turtle when running before the wind, as the boat was then going too fast and the peg always came out.

Presently I sight a turtle on the weather bow, about twenty yards off, and we make a bid for him by luffing up just before we get abreast of him, but the little boat does not carry her way sufficiently to get within reach of him, and he sees us and makes off. Then we sight one on the lee bow, and by making a short detour leeward and then luffing up, we get right over him with very little way on the boat, and I get a fair job at him and feel that he is well and firmly pegged. Off he goes at an astonishing speed, broad on the bow, and the line burns my fingers as it runs out; but the middy and the boy get the mast and sail down very smartly, out oars, turn the boat's head in the right direction, and then give way, so that I am soon able to put a little strain on the line, and finally to hold on tight and make the turtle tow the boat, which he does quite as fast as we could row her.

His first rush is about 150 yards, and then he stops, and I haul up to him hand over hand until quite close to him, when he makes another rush, but shorter than the first one, and so on, for about twenty minutes or half an hour, at the end of which time he is played out like a salmon and flops about helplessly on the top of the water; and now he has to be turned on his back and got into the boat, so overboard go the middy and the boy, and soon have him upside down and helpless. They are standing on the bottom, up to their armpits in water. I am in the boat, and

get a grip of one fore-fin and one hind-fin of the turtle, and they get their shoulders under him, and with a "One, two, three! heave!" down goes the gunwale of the boat and in comes the turtle; and in comes also the water, so that the little boat is more than half full, and my crew must wait patiently while I bail her out with a bucket, until they can be allowed on board again.

Most of the turtle we caught were over 300 lb., a few were over 400, and occasionally we got a small one under 100, but this was rare. I kept a regular record, a turtle log, and the best day's sport was five big turtle all over 350 lb. We caught more than we could use ourselves at the time, so we built a storage pond of coral rocks on the shore of one of the islets, and put a lot of turtle into it; but one night it came on to blow and knocked a hole in the wall and ten turtle escaped, so then we tried mooring them to posts driven into the sand close to the water's edge, and in this way they swam about gaily and seemed to be quite happy, though they were not getting any "forrarder."

One day the gunner, who was a very good fellow and a bit of a character in his way, said he would like to try his hand at turtle-spearing, so we took him out in the little boat and gave him the spear; the other two being my amphibious middy (G. Temple) and myself. In due time we got him over a big turtle, and he drove in the peg with a mighty thrust, as if he were ramming home a 32-lb. shot. Off went the turtle and out went the line, into the coil of which the gunner managed to place one of

his enormous feet. A catastrophe seemed to be inevitable; but on the inspiration of the moment, and in order to avoid losing his turtle, he promptly jumped overboard. The turtle was not then actually running, and we hoped to be able to clear the line before he made his next move; but we were not given time, for the gunner, who was standing up to his shoulders in water, was whipped off his legs and towed away in spite of himself. Temple and I rowed after him, but just before we got to him the turtle made another rush, and off went the gunner again with his head under water. We could hardly row for laughing, and scarcely realized how critical the situation was until we finally got hold of the gunner and found that he was very nearly drowned; for although he was a good swimmer he never got a chance. We got him into the boat eventually, puffing and spluttering and making use of strange language; but the frequent jerks on the line had loosened the peg, and the turtle was lost.

Shortly after this the gunner announced that in his opinion spearing was all humbug, and that he could catch a turtle by jumping overboard and turning him, without the unnecessary operation of spearing him; and he was sure, at any rate, that two could do it, so he persuaded another of the midshipmen (Shergold Smith)* to join him in the attempt. They made several

* George Shergold Smith was a fine plucky lad; he left the navy after becoming a lieutenant, and went out to East Africa as a missionary, and he and all his companions were murdered on an island in Lake Tanganyika.

bets that they would succeed, and away they went in the little boat. We watched them from the ship, and they seemed to be a long time finding a turtle (it turned out afterwards they were looking for a small one). Then they both jumped overboard, and we saw a great splashing going on in the water and the boy in the boat rowing after them. Presently they came on board with a small turtle of about 50 lb. weight. They had won their bet, but the gunner had his arm in a sling for several days with a sprained wrist, and Smith's knees and feet were so scraped and cut with the coral that he could not put his trousers on, and had to go on the sick-list. They did not try it again.

There were plenty of other fish on the reefs besides the turtle (N.B. A turtle is a "reptile"), but we could not get near them in the day-time to spear them; so we constructed a sort of cage with iron hoops and filled this with combustibles, to which we set a light, and then went out on the reefs at night with the grains, to spear fish. The so-called "grains" is a weapon with five barbed prongs, like Neptune's trident, the butt being heavily weighted with lead, and it is thrown, and not jobbed like the turtle spear.

The fishes, attracted by the light, came rushing at it from all quarters, and the water being extremely phosphorescent, they made a bright silvery streak which we could see coming along like a comet from a long way off, and then, passing under the flambeau, they disappeared again in the distance. We could not see the fish itself and could only guess what it was

as we took a shot at it. There was a great fascination about this night fishing. We did not get many fish, but there was something weird and mysterious in the streak of silver rushing at the light and then disappearing again in the opposite direction. There was a charm, too, in the surroundings—bright starlight night, with every star shining "like a diamond in the sky," the water almost calm, with a faint land breeze wafting off the odours of the tropical forest. It is like fairy-land or a dream. But there is not much time for dreaming, for here comes a mighty comet, straight at the light. Down goes Neptune's trident, and it rebounds again off the horny back of a silly old turtle, who ought to have known better than to go dashing about at this time of night, instead of sleeping quietly on his sandy bed. He makes off again, frightened but unhurt. And now here comes another streak of light, not so big as the last one, but still it must be a good-sized fish. This time we make a good shot, and up comes a parrot-fish, a brilliant green creature with large scales, canine teeth, and lips like an animal; very beautiful to look at, but not much good to eat. In fact, as a general rule these tropical fishes are not to be compared to our cold-water fishes as food. Still, they are all we can get at present, and better than nothing.

And now probably the reader has had enough of fishing for the present; so we will get back to Jamaica, with fifty fine fat turtle to distribute amongst our friends.

I used often to try and calculate how much those fifty turtle would have fetched in the London market, if we could have got them there in good condition. Turtle in captivity do not seem to require food. We often had them for weeks on their backs, with their heads on wet swabs, without their losing weight appreciably; but I believe they are generally brought home to England in separate small tanks, about the size of the turtle himself, so as to avoid knocking about when the ship rolls. At any rate there need be no shortage of turtle-soup for our city aldermen until the reefs of the Gulf of Mexico are fished out, and that will take some time.

One day, when we were lying peacefully at anchor in Port Royal harbour, Jamaica, news came on board that a trading schooner belonging to Emanuel Lyons & Co., of Kingston, had been pirated; that is to say, the black crew had mutinied, murdered the only two white men, the captain and the cook, and carried off the vessel, which was laden with what the Yankees call "notions," and the black crew were now coasting along and selling the goods at all the small towns and villages on the coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua. With this information, but with a very vague notion of where the schooner might now be, the *Cordelia* started off in pursuit.

We had a long and weary chase after that vessel. Sometimes we got news of her only a few days old, and it seemed as if we might come up with her at any moment, as we had the use of steam and she had none, but then at the next

place we touched it might perhaps be a fortnight or three weeks since she was there, so that we knew not which way to turn, as the people told us that she always sailed at night and they could not say which way she had gone.

It was something like the chase of Evangeline after her lover, though I expect the meeting would have been different if in either case the end had been attained.

One day we were anchored close to the shore near the Pearl Quay lagoon, when we saw a schooner which answered to the description of the one we were seeking. She was beating up to windward along the shore, towards us, but had been hidden by a point of land until she was within about a mile of us, when she suddenly put her helm up and ran away before the wind. Our fires were not alight, the captain and three other officers and thirty men were on shore hauling the seine, so I hoisted the general recall, ordered steam with all dispatch, and opened fire on the schooner with the 40-pounder Armstrong. But she was a very small object, and although we put a few shot over her, we failed to hit her, and she was soon out of range, scudding away before the wind.

By the time we had got our men on board, our boats hoisted, our anchor up and sail set, night had fallen, and we never got another sight of the pirate schooner—assuming that this really was the vessel we were seeking, though of course there was no proof of it beyond the suspicious circumstance that she turned about directly she saw us. Still, it might have been a peaceful

smuggler or some other navigator who had no wish to meet a man-of-war: and I wonder what would have been done to me if I had sunk her or killed some of the crew and she had turned out not to be the pirate.

After this we lost all trace of our chase, and finally we got reliable information that the mutineers, having disposed of Emanuel Lyons' cargo of "notions," took the vessel round Cape Catoche into the Gulf of Mexico, ran her on shore on the Yucatan coast, set fire to her, and escaped up-country with the swag.

While we were engaged upon our fruitless chase we found it most difficult to get fresh provisions of any sort, and we were on "salt grub"—both officers and men—nearly the whole time. The paymaster managed to buy two bulls at a little island called Cozumel, and he did not hear the last of those bulls for a long time, for they were so tough that the youngest and hungriest A.B. in the ship could not get his teeth through their sinews, and "Cozumel bull" became a byword for tough meat for the rest of our commission.

One of the places I landed at to seek information was a small village near Cape Gracios-o-Dios: it was an open beach exposed to the trade-wind, there was a nasty surf extending a long way out, and the cutter was half full of water and nearly swamped by the time we got on shore. I got no information here, but while I was talking to the natives, who understood a little nigger English, a man came along leading a well-grown calf with a rope round his neck and offered the beast for

sale. After a good deal of bargaining, I purchased the animal for three dollars (12s.) and the man handed me the rope and got his money; but no sooner had the rope changed hands than the calf kicked up his heels and set off full gallop along the sandy beach, amidst roars of laughter from the natives, in which I am afraid my own boat's crew joined also; as well they might, for he was a well-grown calf, almost as big as what they call a "store" in Ireland, and it was all I could do to hold on to the rope and keep up with him. He went for about a hundred yards and then stopped and glared at me, as if he had never seen a naval officer in uniform before. Then he kicked up his heels again and galloped off along the beach, but this time luckily towards the boat, where my trusty sailors, having had their laugh, formed a cordon across his path, armed with the boat's stretchers, soon stopped his wild career, threw him on his side, spanshackled his legs, and bundled him into the boat, and it was not long before that calf was turned into roast veal.

I have always thought that the man who sold me the calf for three dollars believed the animal would make his escape, and then, having got his money, he would have run off himself and eventually caught the beast; but if that was his game he was sold. Anyhow, our caterer admitted that it was the cheapest meat he had ever bought for the mess, and he was also able to supply the captain and the midshipmen's berth with as much as they wanted. The only difficulty was that we could never agree as to whether the so-called calf was a young individual of a big breed of the genus

bovinæ or an older member of a small breed, and thus a fierce argument arose as to whether we were eating veal or beef, an argument which was never settled and which quite embittered the harmony of our mess; like Bret Harte's two miner chums who swore mortal enmity, and tried to shoot one another, because one said there was too much salt in the soup and the other said there wasn't.

Having lost all trace of the pirate schooner and practically abandoned the chase, we anchored off Cape Catoche, the north-eastern cape of the Yucatan Peninsula, hoping that perhaps the vessel would try to make for the Gulf of Mexico when she found it was getting too hot for her on the eastern coast. This she actually did, but whether before or after our visit we never knew. It was while lying at this anchorage that I got the only close view I ever had of those great flat fish known as "devil-fish." We were in four fathoms of water, and it was so beautifully clear that we could see our anchor and the chain lying on the sandy bottom. We were just sitting down to breakfast in the wardroom, when the quartermaster of the watch put his head down he hatchway and reported that there were "two tremenjous great fishes a-swimmin' under the stern." We all ran on deck, and there we saw the brown backs of two great fish like enormous skate swimming very slowly, and occasionally rising to the surface and breaking the water.

"Call away the first cutter. Send for Berry." Berry was a weather-beaten old A.B. who had served his time in a whaler, and was the recog-

nized harpooner of the ship and a dead shot at porpoises and dolphin. The cutter was soon ready, and Berry too, as keen as mustard; but, as bad luck would have it, Berry that very morning had broken the harpoon in the back of a shark, so that the only weapon available was the five-pronged fish grains (Neptune's trident). The blacksmith was instantly set to work to repair the harpoon, but as there was no time to lose, Berry was sent away in the cutter with the grains and the deep-sea lead line, and five minutes afterwards we saw him lunge the grains into the back of one of the devil-fish, which immediately quickened his pace and went off, towing the cutter after him; but he was a most accommodating devil-fish, for instead of going out to sea, as we expected, he turned and came back towards the ship. Then there was great excitement; every officer and man in the ship came up to see what was going to happen, all the bluejackets up in the rigging and the marines along the hammock nettings.

"Man the second cutter." But what was she to do? The blacksmith was still hammering away frantically at the harpoon, but there seemed little chance that it could be ready in time to be of any use. The gunner suggested boarding pikes and the sergeant of marines suggested half a dozen marines with their rifles, to try and shoot the devil-fish. Both suggestions were adopted: the marines with their rifles and ball cartridge and the boarding pikes were put into the second cutter, which was now manned alongside, and she shoved off to join in the fray.

Just then the devil-fish turned and came straight back for the ship and passed close under the flying jib-boom, towing the first cutter behind him, and with the fish grains sticking in his back. The second boat cut him off, got right over him, and drove three or four boarding pikes into him, and the marines fired volleys into him at close quarters; but this salute seemed to have no effect upon him: the bullets and the boarding pikes were mere-pin pricks, and the latter, having no barbs, quickly fell out; the short prongs of the fish grains had not sufficient hold, and after towing the cutter about for another ten minutes they also fell out; the devil-fish was free, and we saw him no more.

These were the only devil-fish I ever saw at close quarters, though I believe there is a regular fishery for them on the shores of South Carolina.

It was perhaps just as well that the devil-fish escaped, for I have not the least idea what we should have done with him if we had captured him.

Shortly after this we were ordered to Hayti, the Black Republic, where the perennial revolution was in progress. First we went to Port-au-Prince, the capital, where some snuff-and-butter-coloured Jews who claimed British citizenship were singing out for a man-of-war to come and protect their money-bags. A sort of desultory warfare went on round the town, but the area of operations was limited by the fiat of the foreign consuls, which prohibited all shooting within certain zones. This made it rather awkward for the combatants, but they thought it better to submit under protest

than to have a foreign man-of-war bombarding their positions.

Then we were relieved at Port-au-Prince by another ship, and went on to Cap Hatien, a small town at the north-west corner of the island. Here there was also fighting going on. The party which supported one of the presidents was in possession of the town, and the party which supported the rival nigger president was besieging the town; but the fighting was of a rather desultory and not of a very deadly type. They used to stop shooting altogether and look at one another for days together, and then fire a few shots, and so on. Probably they were short of ammunition.

We were very good friends with both parties, and we used to land and talk to them. They were, of course, very anxious to gain our sympathy and support, and tried to borrow money and get powder from us; but we maintained strict neutrality.

After spending about six weeks here without seeing anything exciting in the shape of a fight, we were relieved by H.M.S. *Bulldog* and returned to Port Royal, leaving the *Bulldog* to protect British interests at Cap Hatien; and then a most extraordinary thing happened. It seems that the captain of the *Bulldog* had occasion to find fault with the proceedings of the party which was in occupation of the town. I think they fired upon a small schooner which was taking supplies to their enemies, and which, with or without authority, was flying the British flag. At any rate, whatever it was they did, the captain of the *Bulldog* sent them an ultimatum to the effect that if they

did not make such and such reparation before morning he would bombard the town and sink their navy, which latter consisted of one small screw steamer, mounting a brass 6-pounder in the bows.

The reparation was not made, and the *Bulldog* then withdrew from the anchorage for the night, and on the following morning at daylight steamed in again, and having fired a few shots into the town, which replied feebly, she steamed straight at the small steamer, which was lying at anchor, intending to ram her and sink her; but, unfortunately for the *Bulldog*, the little steamer had shifted her berth during the night and got in behind a shoal with about ten feet of water on it, and in the grey of the morning the "bulldogs" did not observe this change of position, and in trying to ram the steamer they went hard and fast aground on the shoal. It was a regular booby-trap, and the *Bulldog* was fairly caught in it.

The first thing the *Bulldog* did after getting aground was to sink the small steamer with one shot from her bow gun, and then, instead of silencing the little guns on shore, which she could easily have done with her heavy armament, she proceeded to hoist out her boats and lay out anchors for heaving the ship off. There was nothing in the fortifications of Cap Hatien which any ordinary British gunboat could not have silenced in half an hour. We in the *Cordelia* knew every gun and popgun that was mounted in the place, and we always considered that if it had come to blows while we were

protecting British interests we could have knocked the place about their ears with the greatest ease. The guns were very old, iron six and nine pounders of an ancient French pattern, with the vents nearly as big as the bore; the carriages were rotten and the ammunition bad.

Possibly the captain of the *Bulldog* did not know this. At any rate he devoted all his attention to getting out boats, laying out anchors, and throwing overboard coal and stores to lighten the ship. The result was that the enemy's popguns, being practically unmolested, fired away steadily at the ship, and after some time a lucky shot killed the boatswain and two men. This seems to have created something very like a panic in the *Bulldog*, and the captain decided to abandon and set fire to the ship and escape in the boats, trusting to be picked up by some passing ship. This plan was adopted, and the *Bulldog's* crew were picked up at sea by a merchant-steamer and brought to Port Royal.

I think my old friend Captain Vansittart would have landed and spiked the guns; though he would have wanted some biggish spikes, for the vents were enormous.

Of course there was a court-martial on the loss of the *Bulldog*, and the captain was censured; but the Press in England took his part, particularly *Punch*, and he became rather a hero for a short time. I well remember *Punch's* picture. It was a cartoon, and I think by Tenniel. There was a robust-looking naval officer

in a captain's full-dress uniform, with the head of a bulldog, and there were complimentary verses, the burden of which was that "he thinks less about courts-martial than the honour of the flag."

It must be a grand thing to get the Press on your side if you get into trouble. They always know such a lot about it.

I don't think the captain of the *Bulldog* was ever employed again; but he got a good service pension!

In 1865 the Jamaica rebellion broke out; though it is not known to this day whether it was worthy of the term "rebellion" or whether it was merely a local rising of small importance magnified into a rebellion in consequence of the panic which seized upon the whole of the white population of the island. At any rate it was suppressed with extreme severity, not to say cruelty; and even those who would be the last to advocate leniency in cases of mutiny or rebellion were horrified at the orgie of slaughter which went on in the island for weeks after every sign of riot and disorder had been suppressed.

There was a long and acrimonious controversy over the conduct of Governor Eyres. Those who supported him maintained that it was only by the prompt and vigorous measures which he adopted that a wholesale massacre of all the white population of the island was averted, while his critics declared that he acted in panic and that there never was any widespread plot for a general rising of the blacks for the purpose of exterminating the whites.

In justice to Governor Eyres and those who

acted with him it must be borne in mind that it was only eight years since the great Indian Mutiny, and a small white population, with their women and children, living scattered and isolated amidst an overwhelming number of blacks, may well have had their nerves unstrung and their mental balance upset by the memory of Cawnpore; and there was also the record of the neighbouring island of Hayti, where the blacks actually did rise and slay their French masters at the time of the French Revolution. Yet when all legitimate excuses for panic have been made, the story of the suppression of the Jamaica riot is not a chapter in national history of which Englishmen can be proud, and I do not propose to dwell upon it. All I know is that I was very glad the *Cordelia* was not at Jamaica when it occurred, for it is quite possible that we also might have been infected with the panic. We were at Havana, and when we got back to Port Royal it was all over except the hanging and shooting, which went on for some time, but in which we were not called upon to take part.

One result of the Jamaica riot was that the admiral, Sir James Hope, came to Port Royal in his flagship, the *Duncan*; and having collected a squadron of seven of his ships, he stationed them round the island at various ports, with very elaborate and somewhat pedantic orders as to what steps were to be taken in case there were any further riots and it became necessary to land marine and small-arm parties for the protection of the white population.

Our station in the *Cordelia* was first at Savanna-la-Mar and then at Black River, both in the west end of the island. At Savanna-la-Mar there was still a good deal of the sugar business going on, and the planters were most kind and hospitable, though they impressed upon us that they were making sugar at a loss, in the hope of better times coming, when the home country would reverse the suicidal policy of free trade; though I fear none of them lived to see these better times. We also got very good snipe-shooting here, and our captain got engaged to be married to a fair Creole, but the marriage never came off, as he was invalided home to England and died at sea during the passage.

At Black River we were near a delightful part of the island known as the Santa Cruz Mountains, where there was quite a large colony of white planters and their families, who were always ready to receive us and entertain us with the proverbial hospitality of Jamaica; and many merry days we spent in that beautiful district, riding their horses in the daytime and dancing with their daughters at night.

Not far from Black River there was an extensive marsh, in which there were many wild duck; but we could not get within shot of them in the daytime, as there was very little cover. We found out, however, that they used to fly in a certain direction after dark, crossing a ridge of dry land. These ducks used to whistle, just like a human being, as they flew, and they did not fly just after sunset, like respectable non-whistling ducks, but waited until it was quite dark, so that one

could not distinguish the individual birds at all, but only see something like a dark cloud passing overhead, into which you let fly both barrels, and very often down came one or more ducks. The birds seemed to fly in very close order at night, much closer than ducks do in the daytime; for otherwise we should scarcely have been as successful as we were by blazing into "the brown." The bother was that we lost a great many dead birds. We could hear the flop well enough when they fell, but if they were quite dead it was very difficult to find them, though if they were only wounded and flapping about, it was much easier to pick them up. The whistle was of great assistance, as it let us know when they were coming; and, indeed, it was so dark sometimes that we fired quite as much at the whistle as at the very indistinct cloud.

## CHAPTER XIII

In Canadian waters—The Fenian scare—A wedding and an accident—Catching a sturgeon—Canadian hospitality—Prince Edward's Island—Trout-fishing at Gaspé—Winter sports at Halifax—Back in the West Indies—The mongoose.

IN 1866 some Irish-Americans calling themselves Fenians sought to free their native land from the Saxon yoke by making armed raids into Canadian territory, where they had a few sympathizers; and these incursions called a large part of the West Indian squadron to the North. The *Cordelia* went North, and we remained in Canada for a whole year, spending most of the summer in the Bay of Fundy and the winter at Halifax, without ever coming down into the tropics.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody some good, and we blessed the Fenians, for we had a very good time. At first we lay in the river at the flourishing town of St. John, New Brunswick, where we received the greatest hospitality, and then we moved down to St. Andrew's, a small town on the border between the State of Maine and New Brunswick, as there had been some raids across the border and more were threatened. There was a little island called Indian Island, practically uninhabited, but where sheep were grazed. It was just on the border, and we

received information that a party of Fenians were planning a raid upon it, so we landed a guard of marines and bluejackets, with their rifles and the field-gun, under the command of our only other lieutenant and two midshipmen. The distance from the ship was about a mile, and we were always on the alert and ready to man and arm boats and send reinforcements in case of an attack.

One night, about midnight, blue-lights were burnt on Indian Island and a brisk rifle-fire was opened. Reinforcements were immediately sent, but by the time they arrived the battle was over and firing had ceased. It was a very dark night, and nothing could be seen, on land or sea; and the total result of the engagement was that one bluejacket sentry had a fit and one sheep was found dead in the morning. It was never known for certain whether there had or had not been a raid. The people on the island said there had, but the people in the ship remained sceptical.

The greater part of this summer was spent at St. John's, where we made many friends and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. We had dances to our heart's content, and were also able to get away for three or four days at a time on fishing excursions, as the trout streams were numerous and the trout unsophisticated and not nearly so shy as English or Irish trout, so that we sometimes got very good baskets. One place called Sussex Vale was a fisherman's paradise, though we could get no meat at the little cottage at which we put up, and we got very tired of our own trout and eggs.

We were, of course, more or less tied to our ship; but when the Fenian scare had quieted down a bit I made an interesting trip up-country to a place called Sackville, to attend the wedding of a friend. Sackville is at the head of the Bay of Fundy, where there is the greatest rise and fall of tide in the world—sixty feet perpendicular. We did not go by water, but by land. There was a train for a hundred miles and then twenty miles by coach, a regular old-fashioned four-in-hand mail-coach, which landed us at Sackville, a very primitive village forty-five years ago, and a wild country, not at all like Longfellow's Acadia, which must have been somewhere near this spot.

After the wedding, when the bride and bridegroom had departed, there was a sumptuous supper, and the only place big enough to hold all the guests was an empty barn, where improvised tables and planks laid on casks for seats accommodated some fifty people. All went merry as a marriage-bell until my own captain, standing up, with a knife and fork in his hands, to carve a turkey, was seized with an epileptic fit and fell backwards, flourishing the knife and fork and giving a piercing scream. This produced a panic which could scarcely have been worse if the barn had caught fire, and the merry guests rushed about in all directions, as if there had been an earthquake or a devastating hurricane.

After helping to carry out my captain, who was as stiff as a plank, and putting him in the hands of a doctor, I returned to the barn and found there a forlorn maiden of my acquaintance who had lost her mamma in the confusion, and

was in a state bordering on hysterics; so I got her out, took the first buggy I found (the horses were all tied up to trees round the barn), and drove off in the dark, feeling like Perseus rescuing Andromeda. The buggy had no lights, and before I had gone very far, another buggy, coming in the opposite direction, ran into us and capsized our buggy, knocking down the horse, breaking both shafts, and shooting me and my fair charge into a muddy ditch. Andromeda was now quite limp, and could neither stand nor walk, so I had to pick her up in my arms and carry her to the nearest house, which fortunately was not far.

The man who ran into me was most apologetic, said it was all his fault, as he was on the wrong side of the road, undertook to look after the wreck while I carried off the maiden, said he would make it all right with the owner of the buggy I had commandeered, which he did, like a gentleman, and next day, when I offered to pay all damages, I was courteously told by the young men of the place that I had only done what any of them would have done under the same circumstances, and they would not let me pay a penny. I heard casually afterwards that I was expected to propose to Andromeda. It would have been romantic; but I did not want a wife just at that time.

After my captain had had a day's rest, the doctor declared him fit to travel, so we started to go back to St. John's; but when we joined our mail-coach (about a dozen wedding guests) we found the coachman was so drunk that it was impossible he could have driven without an upset.

Matters looked bad, as there was only one possible train from Monkton—the railway-station—to St. John's, and we could not afford to wait until the coachman got sober. There was a consultation, and all the men declared that they had never driven four-in-hand and were not prepared to undertake the job with a coach full of passengers. At last one of them proposed that he and I should sit together on the box and that he would drive the leaders if I would drive the wheelers, an arrangement to which I agreed, and in this way we got to Monkton in time for the train and without a capsize. Steering the wheelers was quite an easy business, as they just had to go wherever the leaders took them.

The coasts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia swarm with fish, and Newfoundland may be said to live on fish. One day, when we were lying at Campobello Island, I went away in my little skiff with one of the midshipmen, and, having bought six pennyworth of bait, we anchored in sixteen fathoms of water and started fishing. In two hours our arms were so tired with hauling in our lines that we could hardly row back to the ship, and the little boat was full up to the thwarts with cod and haddock.

There is a very good kind of fish which I never saw anywhere except in the Bay of Fundy. They call them gaspereau, and they are like very big herrings, and excellent eating. One day, when we were lying in the river off St. John's, there were a number of boats fishing for gaspereau with drift-nets, when one of them got hold of something bigger than a gaspereau, and, being in trouble,

asked leave to hold on astern of our ship, which, of course, was granted, and presently they hauled in a sturgeon about six feet long. He had fouled and torn the net, and they had further to cut it to get him clear; and they were making use of very strong language, which rather surprised me, as I thought it was quite a valuable catch, which would more than pay for the repair of the net; and I was still further surprised when they told me that they did not want the sturgeon, and I could take him if I wanted him, as they were going to throw him overboard after killing him to prevent him from doing any more mischief. So I accepted the gift, got the sturgeon on board, and found he weighed 180 lb., and further that he, or rather she, was full of roe. Visions of caviare! Two wash-deck buckets full of sturgeon's roe. Was there ever such a chance of getting a supply of cheap caviare at something less than 10s. a pound? Well, we tried it all ways—fresh, salted, boiled, pickled in vinegar, dried in the sun; but we could make nothing of it, and had to throw it all away.

I had always heard that a sturgeon was a royal fish, fit for a king's table, but we found it very indifferent eating, coarse and tasteless, something like bad veal.

One day the *Cordelia* was becalmed on the edge of the great bank of Newfoundland, in seventy-fathom water. Our fishing lines were only forty fathoms, so the paymaster and I spliced our lines together, put a sinker and hook on each end, and fished across the bridge. As he hauled up a fish I let down my line and vice versa. It was hard

work in seventy fathoms, but we caught a lot of big codfish before the breeze sprung up, and they were all dead by the time we got them on board. No doubt the sudden change of pressure from that depth of water to the surface killed them.

About this time I had a delightful trip in Prince Edward's Island. The ship was lying at Pictou, on the north shore of New Brunswick, and I was on shore on a fishing expedition with one of the midshipmen, intending to return to the ship that night; but when we got back to Pictou we found the harbour empty. It appeared that the captain had received telegraphic orders to go to sea immediately, and our messmates had just time to pack a portmanteau of clothes, put £10 into it, and write a note to say that the ship would be at Georgetown, Prince Edward's Island, at the end of a week; so next morning we took steamer to Charlotte Town, in the same island, hired a horse and trap for a dollar a day and drove all over the island, fished in every likely-looking river we came to, and had excellent sport. The country people were most kind and hospitable, and by their accent seemed to be mostly of Scotch and Irish descent, if not actual immigrants.

We used to drive up to a farmhouse or cottage (all wooden, as there is scarcely any stone in the island), ask leave to sleep in the barn, which was readily granted provided we did not smoke—which neither of us did—and then they fed us on good plain food and would take no payment of any sort, saying they were only too glad to see us,

and apologizing that they had no spare bedrooms in which to accommodate us. Most of them seemed to have good big families and to be healthy, happy, and flourishing, and we were very comfortable in the barns, as it was the height of summer and quite warm.

It was a very cheap and a very enjoyable trip, and we caught quantities of trout, which we were able to be generous with, though, strange to say, the farmers and their wives did not seem to care much about them, which accounts for the rivers being full of them.

Prince Edward's Island is about one hundred miles long, and we explored almost the whole of it. The roads are bad ; there being no stone to metal them, they are made of wood—"corduroy" roads they call them—just logs laid crosswise ; and then when two or three logs together get rotten, it makes a good big rut. The whole island is composed of a soft, rich, red clay, and very fertile. The winter is hard, and the island is sometimes cut off from the mainland by floating ice for weeks together. The width of the strait dividing the island from the mainland is about twelve miles, and the only method of communication in the winter is by light canoes, which are alternately paddled in the clear water, then dragged across the ice floes, then launched again, and so on. A hazardous and precarious sort of passenger service. But I am speaking of forty-five years ago, and they probably now have train ferries and ice-breakers, like Lake Baikal.

The best day's trout-fishing I ever had in my life was at Gaspé, which lies at the extreme north-

east corner of New Brunswick, just where the estuary of the St. Lawrence River turns eastward into the gulf.

The *Cordelia* anchored in Gaspé basin one fine summer's day about noon, and our gallant captain —who was not a fisherman—announced that he intended to go to sea again at two o'clock on the following afternoon. This was very trying, but the paymaster and I were both keen fishermen and not easily put off when there was a chance. So we landed that evening and obtained such information as caused us to undertake an expedition on the morrow, and as the ship was to go to sea at two o'clock next day, we had to make an early start to get to our river. Thus 3 a.m. saw us landing in the dark on the south shore of the bay, from whence we had to make our way through the pathless woods for about two miles. We had a compass and a box of matches, with which we illuminated the compass from time to time; but it was very dark under the trees, and we stumbled about, barking our shins against fallen trunks and floundering in morasses, yet keeping a tolerably straight course for our point, and arrived at the river just as day was breaking. Here we found the watcher, who told us that the two lessees of the river were in camp about a mile farther down, and that he had no doubt they would give us leave to fish for trout, as they were only fishing for salmon. In fact he was so sure of it that he said we might put up our rods and begin fishing at once, while he took our cards and a request to be allowed to fish for trout. So we set to work at once, and as the river was swarming with

ravenous white trout we soon had our baskets full and many more lying on the bank.

In about a couple of hours the watcher returned, bringing with him a polite note, saying we might fish for trout, and salmon, too, if liked; and adding, that as the sportsmen thought we must have left our ship before breakfast, they took the liberty of sending us some provisions, which they hoped would be acceptable; and they were. The basket sent contained a York game pie, bread and butter, and a bottle of claret, and there was not much left when we had finished with them.

The names of these two good Samaritans must be recorded. They were Colonel Manningham Buller and Mr. Morland, of Quebec, and never from that day to this have I met either of them to express my gratitude for their hospitality: yet my gratitude was sincere and quite untainted by any anticipations of favours to come; for we never expected to go to Gaspé again, nor did we.

I find in my journal that "the air was full of rumours of prospective Fenian raids into Canada during this winter (1866–7). A considerable naval force wintered at Quebec, and the *Duncan* (90), Sir James Hope's flagship, the *Niger*, a corvette, and the *Cordelia*, a sloop, wintered at Halifax." So at the end of November all three ships hauled alongside Halifax dockyard, unbent sails, unrove running rigging, and housed in with double canvas for the winter. The great difficulty was to find suitable employment for the crews; for generally speaking when "Jack" has not enough work to do he gives trouble: so we taught them soldiering, and every day, when it was not snowing, we

landed small-arm parties and field-guns' crews, and prepared generally to march up country and fight the Fenians; but the Fenians did not come.

When Dido found that Aeneas did not come, she wept in silence and was di-do-dum.

As for the officers, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves with skating, sleighing, tobogganing, and dancing. There were several thaws during the winter, so that we not only had skating in the covered rink, but also on one of the numerous lakes on the Dartmouth side of the harbour, and also on an arm of the sea known as the Northwest arm. The open-air skating was much more enjoyable than the rink skating, and, as most of the young ladies at Halifax were accomplished skaters, we had tea-parties on the lakes, lighting a fire and making tea on the ice, which was two or three feet thick. Ice hockey was also good fun and warm work, and the winter was, in fact, one big holiday—all beer and skittles—so that we were quite sorry when the spring came and we had to re-rig our ship and go to sea again. And, strange to say, none of us got engaged to be married, though we were all, except one, bachelors.

The summer of 1867 saw us down in the West Indies again, and very shortly after our return to the hot weather our captain (De Wahl) got so ill that he had to be invalided home to England, and we then got our fourth captain (the late Charles Parry, son of Sir Edward Parry, the famous Arctic explorer).

On our return to our old quarters at Port Royal, Jamaica, we found three ships lying there with yellow fever on board. It was not a bad

epidemic, nor was the fever of a virulent type; so it was hoped that it would be stamped out without sending the ships to the north, which was always done when the fever was really bad; but they were getting odd cases about every other day, and immediately landing them at the hospital. One of the ships went to sea for a cruise, and while she was away one of her men died in hospital; and then, by some strange piece of official perversity, the *Cordelia* (the only ship in the harbour which had not had a case of yellow fever) was ordered to send a funeral party and bury the man.

The duty fell to the lot of my young friend, Shergold Smith, whom I have before mentioned; and as the hospital chaplain was sick, Mr. Midshipman Smith had to perform the service himself, which I have no doubt he did with due reverence; but as he was coming on board with his party in the cutter, I saw something in the water towing astern of the boat, and on discovering that this was the Union Jack, I felt it my duty to remonstrate with the young man upon such a want of respect towards the sacred emblem of his country. "Oh!" he said, "it was covering the coffin, and, as the coffin looked leaky, I thought it better to give the flag a good washing before bringing it on board," which was certainly a practical resource.

When I was talking about Jamaica in a former chapter, I forgot to mention a curious case of what may happen when man interferes with the balance of nature. I give the story exactly as it was told to me by a planter, though, of course, I

cannot vouch for the accuracy of it. The rats were eating the sugar-canes and doing an immense amount of damage to the plantations. The planters were told that the Indian mongoose was a deadly enemy to rats, and could be easily naturalized in any tropical country. So a stock of these animals was imported from Ceylon and turned loose in Jamaica. They throve well, and rapidly increased in numbers, and they did destroy the rats; but having done so, either their appetite or their love of destruction was not satisfied, and they next attacked the land crabs, and gave their particular attention to one sort of crab known as the black crab, which is considered one of three gastronomic delicacies of Jamaica; the other two being the ringtail pigeon and the mountain mullet.

Having polished off the black crabs, the enterprising mongoose next climbed the trees and sucked the eggs of the ringtail pigeons, and practically exterminated them. This was bad enough, but worse was to come, for, having developed a taste for eggs, he also sucked those of the insectivorous birds which lived on ticks and other insects; and as a result of this activity a large and particularly irritating species of tick increased in such myriads that neither man nor beast could go into the Guinea-grass—the Guinea-grass being the herbage upon which cattle are fattened in Jamaica.

I have never heard whether the Jamaica farmers have imported some animal to destroy the mongoose and restore the balance of power in the island; but such experiments are, at least, dangerous.

And now I must bring this frivolous chapter to

a close. It has been almost all about sports—including the shooting of the sheep on Indian Island; and we must take the *Cordelia* home and pay her off, and place her on the scrap-heap; or, as she was all wood and not iron, she can be used for firewood, which no doubt she was.

We paid the old ship off at Plymouth in July, 1868, and as I had now been more than six years a lieutenant, I went on shore on 6s. a day instead of 4s.

In the autumn of the same year I was appointed as first lieutenant to the *Hercules*, fitting out at Chatham for her first commission.

# CHAPTER XIV

H.M.S. *Hercules*—Gambling at "Para Grandé"—Lisbon—Snipe-shooting — Hunting at Gibraltar — An expedition to Ronda—The foundering of the *Captain*—"Broadside *versus* turrets" — Searching for survivors — The sinking of the *Vanguard*.

THE *Hercules* was the most powerful ironclad afloat, in this or any other country. She carried 18-ton guns—muzzle-loaders—and nine inches of armour, though this was only in patches; but she had a good deal of six-inch armour, and her water-line and battery were well protected, as against ordnance of that date. She was full rigged, with the spars and sails of a line-of-battle ship, and she could steam fourteen knots—on a pinch, and could sail *a little*. In fact she was the masterpiece of Sir Edward Reed's genius.

Up to the advent of the *Hercules* the three great five-masted ships of 10,000 tons, the *Minotaur*, *Agincourt*, and *Northumberland*, had been considered the most powerful ships in the British Navy, and probably in the world, and Sir Edward Reed's triumph was, that he built a ship of about 8,500 tons which carried a more powerful armament, thicker armour, fifty feet shorter and thus much handier, steamed the same speed, and I was going to say—sailed better; but I had better say—did not sail quite so badly;

and it must ever be borne in mind that at this transition stage in the development of the navy, our rulers at Whitehall insisted that our ships of all classes should have full sail power suitable to their tonnage. "For," said they, "the engines might break down, and then where would you be?"

As to the extent that this conservative insistence upon full sail power handicapped the efforts of our naval architects in making the best use of the various inventions and improvements in metallurgy, gunnery, and marine engineering, which were taking place about this time, there were differences of opinion; though of course we were all very wise after the event, when sails were finally abolished; but there can be no doubt that the naval architects themselves were greatly irritated by the restrictions in development which were thus placed upon them; and Sir Edward Reed—himself a keen and slashing controversialist—used to speak contemptuously of the "mere sailing admirals" who placed their veto on some of his pet schemes, because "engines might break down."

The five lieutenants selected for the *Hercules* received their appointments two months before the ship was commissioned, and were all sent to the *Excellent*—the gunnery school at Portsmouth—to get furbished up in modern gunnery before joining their ship at Chatham. I was at this time only seven years' standing as a lieutenant, and was considered extremely lucky in being appointed first lieutenant of such a ship: in fact, I am sure it must have created some jealousy amongst many

of my seniors of nine and ten years' standing, who were looking out for such a billet, as it meant almost certain promotion, if all went well; and the most difficult step to gain in the navy is now, and always has been, the step from lieutenant to commander.

We commissioned the *Hercules* in the stream, about a mile below Chatham, in October, 1868. Lord Gilford was the captain, Lord Walter Kerr commander, myself first lieutenant, John Ingles second and gunnery, Jim Bruce third, Jimmy Hulton fourth, Robert Bruce fifth, seven sub-lieutenants (the old mates under a new name), and a whole heap of midshipmen. We were very proud of our ship, and it was not long before we got her into apple-pie order.

After our steam trials were over and we had squeezed fourteen knots out of her, we were sent out to join the Channel Squadron at Lisbon; which at that time was under the command of that splendid old seaman and disciplinarian Sir Thomas Symonds—son of Admiral Sir William Symonds, who for many years was controller of the navy and was responsible for the building of a special design of warships known as the "Symondites," good sailers, but very wet, and notorious rollers.

Sir Thomas, or "old Tom" as he was familiarly called, had lately relieved an old gentleman who had allowed the Channel Squadron to fall into a very slack and undisciplined condition: for, according to all accounts, the captains of the various ships used to do pretty much as they pleased, and chaff the admiral by signal and

otherwise. There was a story that on one occasion when the admiral made a signal to one of the captains (my old friend Vansittart) to report his reasons for being out of station, the latter replied that a woodcock flew across the bows and distracted the attention of the officer of the watch.

Old Tom very soon put a stop to this kind of thing, and at the time the *Hercules* joined the squadron there was very little chaff going on, but good, stern discipline and the strictest station-keeping under either sail or steam. The cruising was all done under sail alone, and it was a far more difficult business to make those great, lumbering ironclads behave themselves under sail than it had been with wooden ships. It was really a great waste of time and energy, for it was quite obvious that the advent of armoured ships had struck the death-knell of the sails; and even for some years before sea-going armoured ships appeared on the scene, it was equally obvious that battles would never again be fought under sail; yet the cry still was, "Make sailors of them—whatever you do, make sailors of them." And so we did.

Neither Lord Gilford nor any of his lieutenants had had much practice in squadron sailing, and we all got some nasty knocks over the knuckles from old Tom before we managed to keep the *Hercules* in good station, either under sail or steam, notwithstanding that he ordered all the senior lieutenants in every ship to keep watch and to be in three watches, so that there were two lieutenants in some of the watches, and I had a lieutenant of four years' standing as mate of

the forecastle in my watch. This was not good for the internal discipline or gunnery efficiency of the ship, as neither I nor the gunnery lieutenant had time to perform our proper duties; but it taught us accurate station-keeping, and before long Sir Thomas Symonds was able to take his squadron up the Tagus at a speed of ten knots and make a running moor off Lisbon in fine style.

The Channel Squadron at this date used to spend a good deal of its time at Lisbon, between the cruises, and a very pleasant place it was during the winter months. There was a good opera, very good snipe-shooting, and as a set-off against these innocent amusements there was a gambling place with roulette-tables. This was known in the squadron as "Para Grandé," and was kept by a Portuguese marquis, who fleeced us properly; and it was the ruin of many a promising young officer, for the accommodating proprietor was always ready to cash bills, trusting to the honour of the British Navy.

I am reminded of an amusing but most improper incident that occurred in the case of one of the midshipmen of the squadron, who, having been seized with the fatal spirit of gambling, and having flown all the legitimate kites he could, and borrowed and lost all the money he could get from his messmates, finally drew a bill upon the firm of "Pump and Getit, Fleet Street, London," and signed it "Step and Fetchit." The Portuguese marquis cashed it; but as the firm could not be found in Fleet Street, nor in any other street in London, the bill was returned, the culprit was discovered through his handwriting,

and his captain had him turned out of the Service for the honour of the navy. I must say I always felt a kind of sympathy for that lad, as he probably did not realize the heinous nature of his little joke. If he had been a real forger he would have drawn his bill on a real firm and signed some one else's real name.

There were a good many others who came to grief at "Para Grandê" besides Mr. "Step and Fetchit." But there was one really remarkable instance of steadfast determination by one of the gunroom officers of the *Hercules* (not a midshipman in this case). Mr. T—— went to "Para Grandé" one night and won £100, and then stopped playing, and came on board and went to bed. Next morning he told his messmates that he did not intend to play any more, for which announcement he was laughed to scorn, as they said they had often heard *that* yarn before. Nevertheless, he stuck to his resolution, and the most remarkable part of it was that he used to go frequently to the roulette-tables and look on for hours, but never staked another penny, though he used to advise his friends as to which numbers they should back, and there was certainly a popular belief that his luck was still with him, as he was constantly asked for his advice. The temptation, therefore, must have been great, but he never succumbed.

Lisbon from the sea is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. In this respect it is probably only rivalled by Constantinople ; but in both cases the charm is somewhat dispelled on landing, particularly so in the case of Constantinople, which

is only beautiful from a distance; but Lisbon—if your sense of smell is not too acute—may be classed as a fine city, for it stands on a magnificent site, facing an inland sea twenty miles long and from five to ten wide.

Every one knows that the Portuguese were amongst the earliest navigators—I mean, of course, the navigators of the great oceans of the world, and not the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Norsemen; but I expect very few people know—not even sailors—what was the origin of the familiar words "starboard" and "port." Well, I give the legend as it came to me:—

The prevailing wind in the Tagus is from the north. It blows from the north for about ten months out of the twelve all along the coast of Portugal. The old ships of the early navigators were very leewardly, and the pilot used to stand to leeward when bringing his ship up the river so that he could see out on the lee bow under the sails. The ships were steered with a long tiller, and when the pilot wanted the tiller brought over his way he said "Esta borda" (this way)—starboard, and when he wanted it put the other way he said "Porto" (push)—port. So there you are, my gallant tars, and you may take it or leave it, as you please; but I think it sounds as plausible as any other solution of the conundrum.

There was very good snipe-shooting within easy reach of the anchorage off Lisbon. Asambouge Marsh was up near the famous lines of Torres Vedras, about an hour by train; and there was Alcocheté, across the inland sea, about two hours

by boat; but my favourite marsh was at Coina, also across the lake and about two miles up a small river.

There was always a great rush for these marshes by the sportsmen of the various ships directly after the arrival of the squadron, and the party that got there first got the cream; for the natives did not trouble the snipe, and looked upon us as lunatics for floundering about in mud and water up to our knees for the sake of such insignificant little birds.

One evening the squadron arrived and moored off Lisbon about five o'clock; and as I wanted to get the cream of Coina I arranged with a messmate to make a very early start next morning; so we left the ship at 3 a.m. in a little private skiff of my own which I was allowed to keep on board. It was very dark and blowing fresh from the north, and as we got away from the shelter of the high land the wind increased and also the sea; but we scudded before it with our little sail at a rapid pace and got over to the far side of the lake (about six miles) much quicker than we had bargained for, so that it was still very dark when we got to where the mouth of the river ought to be. We had gone fairly dry up to this; but the sea had now increased considerably and my messmate was baling hard, while I was trying to keep the little boat from being pooped and swamped with a big boat cloak which I pulled round my shoulders as I sat in the stern, steering. Day was just breaking and we could see nothing ahead of us but a line of white breakers, without any apparent opening through which we

could pass. There could be no turning back, as we were already close to the first line of breakers, so there was nothing to do but to take a shot at it and chance it, as we knew that the mouth of the little river must be somewhere about here and we might be lucky enough to hit it off if we were not swamped on the bar; though I must admit that I felt a little nervous, for I had only been up the river twice before, and the leading marks were very indistinct in the murky dawn.

However, that sweet little cherub must have had his eye upon us, as upon many former occasions in my life; and far more by good luck than good management we got safely through the breakers and found ourselves in smooth water inside the bar; and then we chuckled, and said we to ourselves, "Anyhow if we have had a bit of a shave for it, we have managed to keep our ammunition dry; we shall be first on Coina Marsh to-day and get the cream of it before the birds are scared by other guns"; and thus congratulating ourselves on our good luck, we sailed gaily up the river.

But, oh horror! What was that? "Bang, bang, bang." Surely those infernal Portuguese must have taken to shooting *our* snipe, for it is impossible that any boat from the squadron can have been ahead of us and got into the river with less daylight than we had.

We had not long to wait to discover the bitter truth. Four midshipmen from the *Warrior* had got leave to go on shore from their too-indulgent commander directly the squadron anchored on the previous evening; they had hired a shore boat

and come across to Coina, just saving their daylight over the bar; they had slept in a native hovel and were out on the marsh at the first streak of dawn, frightening all the birds though getting very few.

I should probably have done the same when I was a midshipman; but I thought that three o'clock in the morning was early enough for a staid lieutenant, and a first lieutenant too; and then to be cut out by midshipmen!

Our usual ports of refreshment between our monotonous cruises under sail in those unwieldy ironclads, were Vigo, Lisbon, Gibraltar, and Madeira. At Vigo there was not much shooting, though one evening Lieutenant M—— of the *Northumberland*, was reported to have come on board with ten couple of snipe: so all the signalmen of the other ships received strict orders to watch Lieutenant M—— the next time he landed, and to report the direction in which he walked, as long as he remained in sight; but Lieutenant M—— was quite aware that he would be watched and was not such an ass as to betray himself; so he first walked in the opposite direction to that in which the marsh lay and then disappeared behind the nearest hill, when all trace of him was lost. Of course his secret was found out in time, but he got the cream of the marsh he had discovered before anybody else found it out.

There were so many sportsmen in the Channel Squadron that when one discovered anything fresh, it was necessary to exercise some selfishness and protect one's vested interests and sporting rights by secrecy, and *suppressio veri*, if not by

*suggestio falsi*, as otherwise the "find" was sure to be overrun and swamped.

During one visit to Vigo in the summer, I discovered a very nice little trout-stream a few miles from the town, and I managed to keep it for myself and shipmates for some time; but it was, of course, eventually discovered by the whole fleet, and then its placid waters were lashed into a foam like bottled beer, so that the hitherto unsophisticated trout refused to rise any more.

At Gibraltar during the winter months we had the Calpê hounds, and many a good gallop I had with them on a hired screw at one guinea a day, and cheap at the price, as the little hardy Barb horses were very good goers, though there was but little jumping; but "The Rock" in the summer was very hot and relaxing. However, one day in the month of August my captain suggested to me that we should ride to Ronda, a picturesque old Moorish town about sixty miles from Gibraltar. So we packed our saddle-bags, hired our screws, and started off one fine morning at the first break of dawn: the party consisting of my captain, the captain of the *Warrior*, and the first lieutenants of the two ships; leaving the two commanders in charge. We also took a native guide to show us the way.

I think it was the hottest ride I ever had in my life. Nothing in Jamaica, even in the low-lying parts, could compare with the scorched plains of Andalusia in the month of August. Our guide, who took us by bridle-paths, lost his way, and it was getting dark when we arrived at the little village of Gausine, just half-way to Ronda, and put

up for the night at the only inn. We were tired and hungry: but though the so-called "chickens" were as tough as shoe-leather, the beds at any rate looked clean and comfortable. The sheets were snowy-white and there was a beautiful lace fringe on the pillow-covers.

The whited sepulchres! No sooner were we in bed and the candles blown out than we realized that there were a good many other live creatures in the beds besides ourselves, so that we spent the night hunting instead of sleeping; we also found these companionable creatures in great numbers at Ronda and also at another village at which we slept (or rather tried to sleep) on our way back; so no doubt they are indigenous in Spain.

Ronda is a picturesque and interesting old Moorish town, beautifully situated at the edge of a precipice, so that it only had to be fortified on one side, being quite inaccessible on the other. The town is split in two by a great fissure with perpendicular sides, and at the bottom of this fissure—supposed to have been caused by a prehistoric earthquake—the River Guadiara takes its rise in an icy-cold spring 250 feet below the level of the town. There are two bridges crossing this curious geological "fault" in the middle of the town. The new one has a single span, but the old one, with its three arches and quaint architecture, is by far the most picturesque.

We went down by flights of steps to the bottom of the chasm, and had a delicious swim in a sort of rock-cavern tank into which the spring rushes from the rock in a crystal-clear torrent, and then

flows away through the gully on to the plain below the town, to form the head-waters of the Guadiara River. The water was very cold and we did not stay in long; but it was the only time we were cool during the whole expedition.

There is a fine bull-ring at Ronda, but May is the season, and there was no bull-fighting while we were there: though at San Roque—just beyond the lines at Gibraltar—we used sometimes to patronize the Spanish national "sport"; which is certainly exciting to watch, and there would be nothing revolting about a bull-fight were it not for the mutilation of the wretched horses. The bull dies fighting, like a brave animal, facing his foes and game to the last: but the poor horse never gets a chance of fighting at all, and is simply gored in captivity, and in his old age too after many years of faithful service to his masters. The sight of the gored and dying horse used to suggest the uncharitable wish that some of the men might get a poke up behind, just to see how *they* liked it.

Our ride back to Gibraltar was just as hot as our ride up, and equally diversified by midnight hunts.

One of the three winters that I spent in the *Hercules* with the Channel Squadron—sarcastically called by the officers' wives "the Lisbon Squadron"—we made Portland our headquarters between the cruises, and I had some good runs with the Blackmore Vale hounds—one of the best packs I ever hunted with, and at that time hunted by Sir Richard Glyn—known as "the deadly one."

I take the following from my journal:—

"There was not much doing in the way of drills and exercises in the squadron, and notwithstanding that I was first lieutenant of a battleship, I managed to get away one day a week and went up by train to Yeovil, where I hired very good horses from a man called Hussey and had some capital runs with the Blackmore Vale hounds. I had not had much hunting during my life at sea; but I suddenly got to be desperately fond of it, and I think I would, at that time, have pawned some of my clothes for a hunt, if I could not have got it otherwise. I was a very light weight and almost any screw could carry me. It is a trite saying that some men ride to hunt, whilst others hunt to ride, and I am afraid I belonged to the latter class; for, although I did—to a certain extent—enjoy seeing hounds hunt cleverly, the real joy was in cutting down a man on a two hundred guinea horse upon a thirty shilling hired hack. I had some splendid runs, every incident of which I love to dwell upon *except* when I came to grief over a post-and-rail, or floundered into a wet ditch."

And now I come to a tragedy, the saddest event that ever occurred in any squadron in which I have sailed. On September 7, 1870, the iron-clad battleship *Captain* capsized in the middle of the squadron; and out of a crew of six hundred, only the gunner and seventeen men were saved.

In the autumn of 1870 the Mediterranean Squadron, under the command of Sir Alexander Milne, joined up with the Channel Squadron for the purpose of carrying out combined manœuvres

off the coast of Portugal, and Sir Alexander, being the senior admiral, took supreme command.

The low freeboard, fully rigged turret-ship *Captain* had joined the Channel Squadron a short time before, and the combined fleet put to sea from Vigo on the 6th of September.

On the 7th the fleet was sailing in two columns on the starboard tack in a fresh north-west breeze, and Sir Alexander Milne went on board the *Captain* in the afternoon to inspect her and see how she behaved at sea, as she was a novelty, and many old sailors looked grave and shook their heads when they saw her sailing close-hauled with her lee-rail awash.

During the time the Commander-in-Chief was on board the *Captain* the wind and sea had increased, and he had great difficulty in getting into his boat to get back again to his own ship—the *Lord Warden*. In fact, the captain of the *Captain* (Hugh Burgoyne) tried to persuade him not to risk it, but to remain on board for the night and return in the morning. Sir Alexander, however, was a dour auld Scotsman and said he would get back to his ship, and did.

It was my morning watch (4 to 8) on the morning of the 8th, and when I relieved the officer of the middle watch at 4 o'clock he told me there had been a squall, to which we had to shorten sail, but he had not the least suspicion that anything out-of-the-way had happened to any of the ships in the fleet. There was, however, no doubt (afterwards) that it was in this squall that the *Captain* had capsized and foundered.

It had been a very dark night with frequent rain squalls, and when day dawned many of the ships of the combined fleet—having had no previous practice in sailing together—were considerably out of station; though it would be too strong an expression to say they were scattered, for they were all well in sight at half dawn, except the *Captain*; but even when day had fully dawned we could see nothing of her, and then grave fears filled some of our minds, though there was still a faint chance that she might have borne up and run to leeward for some unknown reason.

It was at any rate certain that there could not have been a collision, for in that case either there would be two ships missing, or else the second one would know something about it. As it turned out afterwards the *Inconstant* must have sailed over the spot where the *Captain* foundered, ten minutes after she had gone down, and yet those on board neither saw nor heard anything!

The captain of the *Hercules* came on deck very early that morning, before daylight, and walked up and down the bridge nursing his wounded arm, as he generally did when he was perturbed or anxious about anything. Some brief remarks passed between him and the officer of the watch as day dawned and there was still nothing to be seen of the *Captain*; and at last the officer of the watch ventured to make the remark "I believe she has capsized," to which the captain replied with a grunt, a shrug of his shoulders, and a significant nod of his head. He

was a man of few words, but a thorough seaman, from the peak of his cap down to the heels of his rather untidy shoes ; and to account for the somewhat laconic nature of the conversation given above, it may be mentioned that the captain and the first lieutenant had frequently discussed the question of the stability, or otherwise, of a low freeboard, fully rigged turret ship, from the first day the *Captain* joined the squadron and was seen under sail.

Many small incidents came back to my memory *after* the event, and one was that we used to draw rough diagrams—very rough—on the signal slate with a slate pencil, to show that the *Captain* *ought* to capsize after she had passed a comparatively moderate angle of heel; and we were therefore very pessimistic and feared that our anticipations had come true when she was missing from the fleet that morning.

Now it is quite certain that neither I nor my captain had any knowledge of the science of naval architecture. We had probably heard that there was such a thing as a metacentre—at any rate in modern ships—but whether it was in the maintop or the forepeak we did not much care, as we had sailed in ships of various classes and got on very well without so much as knowing whether they had or had not got metacentres. In fact, I think we looked upon it rather contemptuously, as some new-fangled device got up by scientists to bother sailors. So that it could only have been some unscientific nautical instinct that had sown distrust in our minds concerning the safety of the *Captain* under sail.

I do not mention the above with any idea of claiming the credit of true prophecy; for there were many others besides Lord Gilford and myself who felt that there was something uncanny about the look of the *Captain* under sail: and yet, as we were constantly hearing, just about this time, of the great advances which had lately been made in the science of naval architecture, the discovery of "meta-centres," "righting moments," and "curves of stability," we thought that, after all, the scientific people who built the *Captain* might perhaps know more about it than we did, and with all our apprehensions we found it difficult to believe that a shipbuilder of high repute would build and equip an absolutely unstable ship, and that the Admiralty would allow such a ship to go to sea.

The story of the building of the *Captain* is a curious one. There was at this time an acute controversy between two schools of naval architecture, which may be briefly described as broadside versus turrets. The broadside system of armament found its chief exponent in Sir Edward Reed, who was at that time the Director of Naval Construction, and he was supported by the Board of Admiralty, and I think I may say —broadly speaking—by the great majority of seamen; for it must ever be remembered that full sail power was still a *sine qua non* for warships of all classes.

The protagonist of the turret system was Captain Cowper Coles, R.N., who was enthusiastic on the subject and had been for some years urging the Admiralty to build turret ships, as he

maintained that the superiority of that system of mounting heavy guns had been conclusively proved during the American civil war: and so perhaps it had, but the American turret ships were not rigged.

I need scarcely say that I have no intention of entering into the respective merits of turrets versus broadside, as that has been settled long ago; but to account for the building of the *Captain* it is necessary to understand the terms of the heated controversy which took place at this time between the advocates of the two systems.

The design of the *Captain* was opposed by the Admiralty officials, headed by the Controller of the Navy (Admiral Sir Spencer Robinson, my old captain in the *Colossus*) and Sir Edward Reed, the Director of Naval Construction; and this opposition was attributed—by popular opinion and by a large section of the Press—to personal jealousy on the part of the Board and their advisers: and then after the *Captain* had been built, sent to sea and lost, popular opinion and the Press turned upon the Admiralty officials and reviled them for allowing the *Captain* to go to sea!

It may truly and concisely be said that a valuable ship and six hundred officers and men were sacrificed in deference to popular opinion.

The *Captain* was built by a private firm—Laird Brothers, of Birkenhead—in accordance with the views of Captain Cowper Coles, who sailed in her as a passenger and the guest of Captain Hugh Burgoyne, V.C.; neither of whom were saved.

It was said, after her loss, that in consequence of further investigations into her design by the experts at the Admiralty, a memorandum had been written, and was actually on its way to the admiral in command, warning him that the *Captain* was unstable and should not be allowed to carry sail in anything like a strong breeze: but the order was too late.

I must now return to the *Hercules* on the morning of the 8th, when it was found that the *Captain* was missing from the fleet. The admiral directed the ships to spread in various directions to search; each ship being given a compass course on which she was to steer for so many hours and then reassemble at a rendezvous before dark; and so off we went, the *Hercules* under sail and steam, on a course nearly dead to leeward; but we had not gone more than ten or twelve miles before we suddenly came into a mass of wreckage; the sea being covered with broken spars, hen coops, gratings, bits of boats, oars, and anything that would float.

Then, and then only, all hope was lost.

"Hands shorten sail! Stop the engines! Call away both cutters!"

I was standing on the forecastle at the time, and ran aft and took charge of one of the cutters, and I believe I was the first person that picked up anything belonging to the lost ship, and that was a piece of her jib-boom with a seaman's black silk handkerchief knotted through the sheave-hole; which told a sad tale.

The Commander-in-Chief was still in sight, so of course we made the necessary signals, and

then all the fleet assembled and picked up wreckage; but none of the crew, alive or dead.

Then there was gloom in the fleet, almost as deep as if we had suffered a naval defeat. The search was still continued, and the *Monarch* was ordered to go into Corcubion Bay—close to Cape Finisterre—and see if any survivors could have got on shore there; that being the nearest land. She rejoined the fleet next day, and brought with her the *Captain's* launch and the sole survivors, consisting of Mr. May, the gunner, and seventeen seamen.

Mr. May owed his life to the fact that he was anxious about his guns, and turned out in the middle watch to see that they were properly secured. He was at work in the foremost turret when the ship turned over, and was washed out through the port. The launch was washed off the booms at the same time, and he and the seventeen men managed to get into her and were blown ashore to the nearest land.

At the time the *Captain* was lost, Mr. Childers was First Lord of the Admiralty, and he lost a son in her, a promising young middy.

The *Inconstant* (at that time the fastest ship in the navy) was sent home with the sad news, and of course there was a great sensation in England, and bitter recriminations, and everybody knew all about it after the event, and tried to put the blame on somebody else; but the real reason for this great sacrifice was the simple fact that public opinion and the Press thought they knew more about ship-building than seamen and naval architects. The climax of in-

justice was, however, reached when it was sought to put the blame on the shoulders of Sir Spencer Robinson and Mr. E. J. Reed—as he then was—both of whom were opposed to the design of the *Captain.* Yet it is quite certain that if the Admiralty had peremptorily refused to allow her to go to sea, there would have been a howl of indignation throughout the land, coupled with charges of official jealousy and obstruction of the development of a superior and progressive design.

It has always been the custom in the navy to perpetuate ship's names of glorious memory; with the idea, no doubt, of inspiring those who sail in them to emulate the deeds of those who won renown for their country in a former ship of the same name.

Thus the *Captain* flew Nelson's broad pennant at the battle of Cape St. Vincent, when he executed that famous tactical manœuvre which decided the fate of the day; winning for his country a naval victory, and for Sir John Jervis an earldom.

The *Vanguard* was Nelson's flagship at the battle of the Nile; and there is something remarkable in the fact that the *Vanguard* of the period I am writing about—an ironclad broadside ship—came to an untimely end a few years after the loss of the *Captain*, being rammed and sunk in a fog by her sister ship the *Iron Duke*, off the south coast of Ireland.

Perhaps this was a special decree of Providence to warn us that we cannot go on living indefinitely upon the glories of the past and the heroic deeds of our ancestors.

I think it was Mr Jane (naval publicist) who said a short time ago that we were getting too much of Nelson nowadays; which sounded very like sacrilege in naval ears, though no doubt he meant to imply that a perpetual chatter about Nelson and Trafalgar was an inefficient substitute for due preparation to meet the requirements of modern naval warfare.

The memory of the heroic deeds of the sailors and soldiers of mediaeval Spain did not save that country from defeat and humiliation when it had to encounter a more energetic, more virile, and more vigorous race, which felt that its time had come to demand for itself a place in the sun and the fulfilment of its "rights"; which innocent-looking little word means now, and has always meant, whatever any nation is strong enough to take. Nor will a similar dwelling upon the glories of the past save us when next we are called upon to defend our "rights."

The loss of the *Vanguard* was unattended by any loss of life, as the crew abandoned their ship in ample time before she sank; and the British public and the Press—with some few exceptions—congratulated themselves upon this satisfactory feature in the loss of another iron-clad. Yet there were some unpractical and idealistic people who thought that the loss of the *Vanguard* was a more deplorable national disaster than the loss of the *Captain*; for they failed to see that "never mind the ship, my lads, but hurry up and save your own skins," was neither an inspiring nor lofty ideal to place before British seamen. Very different indeed was the spirit of

duty and devotion shown when yet another great battleship foundered off the coast of Syria, and the crew, inspired by the precept and example of the gallant Tryon, stuck to their posts until the end.

"A useless sacrifice," some cynics will say. But was it a useless sacrifice? Was Sir Richard Grenville's defence of the *Revenge* a useless sacrifice? I must leave the answer to this question to those who know more than I do of those impelling forces, those national and race characteristics, which lead to the rise of world-wide empires such as ancient Rome and modern Britain. Gibbon has explained how the decay of them led to the decline and fall of a mighty empire.

## CHAPTER XV

"Jap"—Spanish treasure and a salvage company—Torpedoes and "ramming tactics"—Grounding of the *Agincourt*—Towed off by the *Hercules*—I join the *Agincourt*—The art of enforcing discipline—In the Mediterranean—Appointed to the *Asia*—On half-pay.

IT has for many years been the custom of the Admiralty to allow a few naval officers of the lesser maritime Powers to serve in our navy for instructional purposes: to learn seamanship, gunnery, torpedoes, and British naval discipline; and thus I have been shipmate with Swedes, Norwegians, Greeks, Chilians, and Peruvians, and in the *Hercules* we had a Japanese, one of the first of that nation who came to England to study British naval methods. Etzuki (or "Jap," as he preferred to be called) was a delightful little man, the son of a daimio, with those charming manners, high courtesy, and that bright intelligence and quick receptivity which distinguish so many of his race, and which have enabled Japan to rise in one generation from a position of insignificance to that of one of the world's leading naval Powers.

Etzuki was placed under my special charge as first lieutenant, and I found him a very apt pupil, keen as mustard, full of energy and also full of fun, and with an almost childish enjoyment of a

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joke, but yet, while on duty, never forgetting his position as an officer or his dignity as a Japanese gentleman, though he loved going aloft with the men to help to furl a sail, or laying out on the jib-boom to stow the jib in a strong breeze, the most difficult sail in the ship to stow, as there is nothing to hold on to—no jackstay, but just a greasy spar and a swaying foot-rope.

It used to bring my heart up into my mouth when I saw Etzuki swarming out on to the jib-boom with the forecastle men to help to stow that great flapping sail, for I felt more or less responsible for him; but he was as active as a cat and a stranger to anything like fear.

The men got to be very fond of him, and helped him along, and although they evidently regarded him as an excellent joke, they were always perfectly respectful to him as an officer, for he had the honorary rank and uniform of a sub-lieutenant.

On one occasion, and one occasion only, did "Jap" forget his dignity, and that was when he turned out of his hammock one morning and put his foot into a steel rat-trap, which caught him by the big toe, and he went dancing round the steerage making use of awful language, I was told, though I don't know where he could have learned it; perhaps from the forecastle men, certainly not from me.

Poor little "Jap"! He rose to the rank of captain in the Japanese Navy and died of cancer in the throat a short time before the outbreak of the Chino-Japanese War. I feel sure his name would have been amongst those upon his country's brilliant roll of honour had he lived. I saw him

once again in Japan in 1881, and he gave me a handsome wedding present.

I have already mentioned Vigo, in the north of Spain, as one of the Channel Squadron's ports of refreshment, but I did not mention that at the time of which I am writing a company was formed to try and recover a quantity of treasure supposed to be still deposited in the wrecks of the Spanish ships destroyed by Rooke's squadron in 1702. The prospectus of the company stated that no attempt had been made to recover this treasure since modern improvements in diving apparatus had been invented and proved, and that there was therefore a reasonable prospect of recovering the greater part of the immense treasure which reliable records showed must be still lying at the bottom of the sea in the inner harbour of Vigo. The wrecks had been located, and there was therefore nothing to do but to pick up tons of silver, with the most up-to-date diving appliances, which the company would supply if they only had the money ; a very big dividend was certain, etc.

It may interest the reader to know how the treasure got there.

Rooke, with a combined Anglo-Dutch fleet, consisting of fifty sail of the line—thirty English and twenty Dutch—besides transports containing nine thousand English and four thousand Dutch troops under the command of the Duke of Ormonde, had just made an abortive attack upon Cadiz, and were on their way home when they picked up intelligence at Lagos that the Spanish treasure fleet, escorted by a powerful French squadron, had put into the port of Vigo, and as this presented them

with a lucky opportunity to wipe out the failure of their attempt on Cadiz, with the additional attraction of a substantial haul of prize money, the allied commanders decided to attack.

The Spanish galleons and their French escort had secured themselves in the inner harbour at Vigo, off the small town of Redondela. The French commodore had constructed a formidable boom with which he barred the entrance, the ends of the boom being protected by batteries on the shore.

The Duke of Ormonde landed with five thousand troops and captured the battery at the south end of the boom. Vice-Admiral Hopsonn, in the *Torbay*, sailed in under a heavy fire and broke the boom ; the other ships that had been detailed to support him followed, and in a very short time the whole of the Franco-Spanish fleet was either burnt, captured, sunk, or run ashore.

In the "Life of Captain Stephen Martin," published by the Navy Records Society, there is a graphic picture of this amphibious battle of two hundred years ago, when you could see your enemy and get at him, instead of bombarding him some miles off.

"Early in the morning all the boats of the fleet were employed in landing the soldiers, to the number of five thousand, in order to attack the fort on the starboard side, and the *Barfleur* to batter it by sea, and the *Association* to do the like on the larboard side. A line of twenty-four sail was appointed to attack the boom and force the harbour, Vice-Admiral Hopsonn leading the van with five sail abreast, then a Dutch admiral and

five sail, and then Sir Stafford Fairborne in the rear with five sail more, the bombs and fireships following close in the rear; and in this manner they made the attack.

"Admiral Hopsonn, with the first five, broke the boom, notwithstanding the fire from the battery and ships that guarded it, but his fore-topmast was shot away. He was no sooner entered than he was boarded by a fireship which burnt his foresail, but put herself off again with the way she had, on coming on board, and soon after blew up; and being a merchant-ship laden with snuff, that in some measure extinguished the flames, but almost blinded and suffocated those that were near. This created such consternation, that the first lieutenant, purser, and one hundred men of Admiral Hopsonn's ship jumped overboard, the greater part of whom were drowned.

"While this was doing, the rest of the ships having got through as fast as they could, were all of a cluster; and Captain Martin with his ship being amongst the thickest, was so near the fireship that blew up, that the snuff drove into the sides of his ship and made the planks of a snuff colour, discolouring everything on board. In short, in less than an hour's time we were masters of the port and harbour. The French, as they quitted their ships, either set them on fire or blew them up; so that for some time there was nothing to be heard or seen but cannonading, burning, men and guns flying in the air, and altogether the most lively scene of horror and confusion that can be

imagined. This confusion, in some measure, lasted all night, so that by the next morning all the ships, French and Spanish, were destroyed or taken, viz.: of the French, ten men-of-war were taken; the remaining five with two frigates and some smaller vessels were burnt. Of the Spaniards, nine galleons were taken, the rest destroyed; and this victory was obtained with the loss of not above two hundred men; but the enemy lost a great number, for besides what were killed in the fight and defence of their ships, the shores of the harbour were strewn with their bodies, blown up and drowned, and no small number were found on the shore at a distance from the harbour, and some a considerable way up the country, whither they were come by the force of the gunpowder when the ships blew up."

The snuff fireship reminds one of the Chinese stinkpot warfare in the Canton River in 1857, when H.M.S. *Niger* was smothered from truck to waterline by a somewhat similar engine of warfare; though the Chinese did not use snuff, but a junk-load of Cantonese sewage, and the unfortunate ship retained the odour for such a long time afterwards that the crews of the other ships endowed her with a sobriquet which Dean Swift might have recorded, though I dare not, as I am not a literary divine.

But to return to the salvage company, which gave rise to this digression. Directly the divers got to work they brought up several ingots of solid silver in a wonderful state of preservation, and the shares of the company went up with

a bound. Diving went on; but no more silver came up, and it was then whispered that the recovered ingots looked as if they had not been two hundred days, let alone two hundred years, under water; so that it seemed as if this submarine mine had been "salted."

The company was dissolved, and some fools lost their money.

I remember hearing that a further and more diligent search of the Spanish archives showed that the bulk of the treasure had been landed and taken up-country before Rooke and Ormonde attacked; and as the attack was evidently expected and prepared for, it seems probable that this was the case; unless we are to suppose that the Spaniards were as great fools as those who put their money on the divers.

In the Channel Squadron in 1870 we had some curious toys in the shape of torpedoes. The locomotive or "Whitehead" torpedo was then in its vigorous youth, and its votaries never doubted the ultimate success of their favourite weapon; but it was not without rivals.

There was, for instance, the spar or pole torpedo, with which we used to carry out regular exercises. This consisted of a charge of gun-cotton, fixed on to the end of a long pole, which was rigged out over the bows of a steam cutter. And you were supposed to steam quietly up to your enemy, while he was at anchor, poke the charge under his bottom and explode it by electricity, then return to your ship and report, "Enemy sunk, sir; found him fast asleep."

The pole torpedo was actually used during the American Civil War. I think it was in the James River, where a boat on the Confederate side drifted down with the current and torpedoed a small Federal ship, where they could not have been keeping a very good look-out; and it was, no doubt, in consequence of this incident that the pole torpedo was introduced into our navy and flourished for a good many years, until it was finally realized that there were not enough chances in a hundred of catching an enemy asleep to make it worth while going on with it, and it was then abolished.

Then there was the Harvey torpedo. This was a very pretty toy, which consisted of a torpedo in the form of what fishermen know as an otter. It was towed out on the quarter, at an angle of about twenty degrees, and was supposed to be used in conjuction with what was known as the "ramming tactics" of that era. You were first to try and ram your enemy, like the ancient Greek and Roman galleys used to do; and then if you missed him with the ram, it was hoped that you might catch him with the Harvey torpedo: and as it was a torpedo which exploded on contact, there was a device by which you could dip it under the bottom of a friend without blowing him up, and then bring it up again when he had passed.

"Ramming tactics" were very much the vogue at this period, in consequence of an incident which occurred at the battle of Lissa, when the *Ferdinand Max*, an old converted Austrian wooden ship, with Admiral Tegethoff in command,

rammed and sank the Italian ironclad the *Ré-d'Italia*; and notwithstanding that it afterwards transpired the event was at least as much accident as design, the idea of destroying your enemy with one blow was so fascinating that ramming tactics were assiduously cultivated for many years after the battle of Lissa, until at last people began to realize, that when ships were manœuvring at speed the difference between ramming and being rammed could only be a question of a few seconds in point of time and half a ship's length in distance, and that, moreover, the ramming ship would probably be herself completely disabled; and then ramming tactics died a natural death, although for many years afterwards our battleships were built with ram projections on their bows, which sank a good many friends but no enemies.

A distinguished admiral wrote a book entitled "The Gun, the Ram, and the Torpedo," in which ramming tactics were exhaustively discussed. We were all bitten with the idea, and so late as 1890, when I was in command of a battleship in the Mediterranean, I induced the admiral to allow me to protect with faggots the sides of the steam pinnaces of the squadron, and then practice actual ramming tactics; so that I cannot claim to have been any wiser than my neighbours.

Somewhat later in point of time there appeared yet another torpedo—the Brennan—for which invention the Admiralty paid a large sum of money; I think £25,000. This was a most ingenious device for destroying an enemy, if he would come near enough. It was intended for

the protection of harbours with narrow entrances; and there was one in active operation at the eastern entrance to Hongkong harbour in 1898, when I was there, and I saw several runs made with it.

I do not know if the Brennan torpedo is still considered to be a serious weapon of warfare, worth its expense; for I am speaking of fourteen years ago, and bows and arrows and catapults were abolished longer ago than that; but in its palmiest days the Brennan torpedo seemed to me very much like the old, and I believe discredited, game of trying to catch a bird by first putting a pinch of salt on its tail. I remember, when I was a very small boy, actually going out with a paper of salt and stalking blackbirds and thrushes; but I never could get near enough to put the salt on their tails.

Why do we tell children such fables? It must cause them to doubt other things which we tell them, and which may happen to be true.

Our naval guns of 1870—and indeed for another fifteen years after—would bring a smile to the lips of a modern gunnery lieutenant. They were short, dumpy things like soda-water bottles, muzzle-loaders, rifled and with studded projectiles, which frequently broke up in the gun, or else turned end over end and went in any direction except the right one; but the guns made plenty of smoke.

The French Navy had effective breech-loaders many years before we had, with the interrupted screw and the swinging breech block, quite on the same general principle as the most up-to-date modern ordnance. But we were too proud to

copy them, though we had ourselves already tried and condemned a breech-loading gun, constructed on a wrong principle—the Armstrong—which killed a good many of our own men through the breech block blowing out and the gun shooting inboard. "Them two-muzzled guns," as the sailors called them.

The next event of interest in the Channel Squadron which I have to record was the grounding of the *Agincourt* on the Pearl Rock in the Straits of Gibraltar, in sight of the fortress, in broad daylight, in clear weather; but then we were saving coal, according to Admiralty instructions.

The squadron consisted of the *Minotaur* (flag of Admiral Wellesley, in command), the *Agincourt* (flag of Rear-Admiral Eardley Wilmot, second in command), *Monarch*, *Warrior*, *Inconstant*, and *Hercules*, and we sailed from Gibraltar for Tangier one fine morning about nine o'clock. The speed of the squadron was very slow—I think about six knots—and the current runs in through the Straits at about four knots; so that once we were clear of Gibraltar Bay we were not making good more than two knots over the ground; but we were saving coal.

The anchors were stowed, the watch was called, and the admirals went below. Everybody knew that we were only making about two knots over the ground; but what the admirals, the captains, and the navigating officers did not appear to realize was that unless the current should happen to be right ahead the squadron would not proceed in the direction in which the ships' heads were

pointed, but, on the contrary, sideways, like a crab; and the *Agincourt*, which was leading the lee line, next to Cabrita Point, ran hard and fast aground on the Pearl Rock, but sideways, and so gently that those on board scarcely felt it, and the *Warrior*, which was next astern, very nearly ran into her. Nevertheless, the *Agincourt* was very firmly aground, and remained there for four days, in spite of the efforts of the whole squadron to get her off.

As soon as it was realized that the *Agincourt* was aground everybody knew all about it, and the squadron closed in and anchored around the stranded ship. Anchors were laid out, with which she tried to heave off, but she did not move; and so then we all set to work to lighten her.

It was a beautifully calm day, without a ripple on the water. Lighters were immediately sent out from Gibraltar dockyard, and all the boats of the squadron assembled round the *Agincourt* to take in stores, anchors, cables, shot, shell, provisions, and everything movable; and there was very little doubt that she would be able to heave off next day, if the weather remained fine. The weather did remain fine, but she did not come off. So then they began to hoist out the heavy guns; and on the second day the *Inconstant* was ordered to try and pull her off; but the captain of the *Inconstant* was rather shy about getting too near the rock, and he did not get near enough to make a proper connection, so this attempt failed.

The situation was now becoming serious, for if the weather should change and a swell set in from the Atlantic before the ship came off, she would

undoubtedly become a total wreck. So then they began to jettison some of the coal which had been saved by steaming at a very "economical" speed; and on the afternoon of the fourth day, as there was still no movement, the *Hercules* was ordered to make an attempt to tow her off.

At last they hit upon the right man for the job. Lord Gilford was a thorough seaman, as I have before mentioned; and although, or perhaps because, he had been brought up under the sails, he had soon learnt to handle his 8,000-ton iron-clad as though she had been a penny steamer on the Thames; and I remember that the first time we went alongside the mole at Gibraltar he rather astonished them by refusing the usual tug assistance, which the other captains accepted, and put his ship alongside the wall as if he had been at it all his life. So when he had received the admiral's orders to make an attempt at pulling off the *Agincourt*, we who knew him felt that it was going to be neck or nothing; and it turned out neck.

With perfect confidence in his own judgment, and without a moment's hesitation, the captain of the *Hercules* let go his anchor exactly in the right spot, and then backed his ship in until the sterns of the two ships were nearly touching and we had very little water under our bottom, though just safe; and in this position it was possible to make a proper connection with two chain cables and to get an equal strain upon them.

Then "Heave round the capstan; full speed ahead," and off came the *Agincourt* amidst the hearty cheers of the squadron, and we all returned to Gibraltar.

That very night a fresh westerly wind sprung up and an Atlantic swell rolled in through the Straits; so if the *Agincourt* had not come off that afternoon she would never have come off at all.

Of course there were courts-martial, and both admirals were superseded, which was rather hard on Admiral Wellesley, who had been brought home from the comfortable and much more independent post of commander-in-chief in North America because there was no other admiral considered to be equally competent to take command of our principal fighting fleet. But there is an inexorable naval tradition, stronger than law, which does not allow admirals or captains to shunt responsibility on to the shoulders of their subordinates, though it sometimes comes hard upon them when they are saddled with careless or incompetent people to carry out the details of their orders.

The rescue of the *Agincourt* from her dangerous position was a bold and skilful piece of seamanship, and was undoubtedly a feather in the cap of Lord Gilford; and as the Admiralty wanted to pay him a compliment, they hit upon the idea of promoting his first lieutenant, which happened to be me, though I had no more to do with it than any other officer in the ship who carried out the captain's orders. Thus I was promoted to the rank of commander in July, 1871, at twenty-nine years of age—very lucky, as promotions were going, at that time.

Soon after the Pearl Rock affair the Channel Squadron returned to England, and I went on shore once more, on a commander's half-pay—

or what was called half-pay—of 8s. 6d. a day, upon which I expected to enjoy myself for a year or so, to make the acquaintance of my relations, and rest from my labours ; for I had had three years' hard work in the Channel Squadron, with the double duty of first lieutenant and watchkeeper at sea: but there was to be no peace for the wicked, and before I had been a month on shore I was invited to go as commander of the *Agincourt*, with a new admiral and a new captain; but she was still to be second flagship in the Channel Squadron.

The invitation came from the captain, Captain J. O. Hopkins, who has from that day to this been my firm and fast friend, and who taught me a good many things that I did not know before.

It was, of course, an invitation that there could be no thought of declining; so I was duly appointed, and off I went again to Devonport, to join the *Agincourt*, which was still in the hands of the dockyard, completing her repairs and refit; for she had been very much knocked about and demoralized by her adventure on the Pearl Rock.

It is not an uncommon event that when a new captain takes command of a ship, a new colonel of a regiment, a new manager of a business concern, and perhaps also when a new parson is preferred to a parish, he finds that matters are not always exactly as they should be, according to *his* way of thinking. In fact, it sometimes goes even farther than this, and he finds that everything is wrong, and that the

ship, regiment, business, or parish wants reorganizing from top to bottom, just as the Socialists say of society.

Thus when Captain Hopkins and I joined the *Agincourt* at Devonport in September, 1871, we found that she wanted reorganizing from top to bottom; and we set to work to do it—according to our ideas; though indeed it would be more true to say, according to *his* ideas, for he was the impelling spirit throughout, and I merely tried to carry out his views, even in the case of those minor details which are usually left to the judgment of the executive officer. Yet, strange to say, I never felt that he was interfering unduly, or poaching in any way on my domain, as he had a way of making suggestions—always practical and straight to the point—which made me feel that it was my suggestion, and not his, and that when the result turned out well—as it always did—the credit was mine!

Undoubtedly the art of keeping all hands in a good-humour is of exceeding value to a captain of a ship, or indeed to anybody in command of men. It is a personal gift, like genius. It cannot be acquired. It may not be imitated. It is not gained by relaxing discipline, by undue familiarity, by seeking popularity, or by any of the devices with which the unhappy imitator seeks to attain it: for there is no one more heartily despised, nor held in greater contempt by seamen, than a "Popularity Jack." Captain Hopkins was as far removed from a "Popularity Jack" as the poles of the earth are from one another; yet he was the most popular captain

I ever served with. The men simply adored him, and would have done anything for him.

I remember once, when I was midshipman in command of a jollyboat, overhearing a *sotto-voce* conversation between two of my crew. They were comparing the respective merits of two of the lieutenants in the ship in which we were serving, one of whom was blessed with the art of command and the other was not. Finally, one of the men said, "I would rather be called a son of a —— by Mr. A. than given a glass of grog by Mr. B." This was perhaps an extreme way of putting the case; though the other man appeared to agree with it.

The *Agincourt* was recommissioned with her old crew; but there was a new rear-admiral—Frederick Campbell—a new captain, and a new commander; and as soon as we were ready we joined the Channel Squadron as second in command, the squadron at that time being under the command of that strict and smart seaman Sir Geoffrey Hornby, so that we knew we should either have to get our ship well up to the mark (and the mark was a high one) in all drills and exercises, or else get a good many raps over the knuckles and a large allowance of cold tongue from Sir Geoffrey; but as we were neither of us partial to cold tongue, we set to work with all our might to make our ship a credit to the squadron; and I think I may say, without vanity, that we were not entirely unsuccessful.

Writing to me some years afterwards, my old captain said: "We turned the *Agincourt* from the noisiest and the worst disciplined ship in

the squadron into the quietest and the smartest; and a few months after we commissioned we went out to the Mediterranean for the *Lord Clyde* court-martial, and beat the whole Mediterranean fleet in their drills and exercises, which was a great triumph." Which was strictly true; but it wasn't *my* doing, although I got much of the credit for it.

How was it done?

Well, I really don't know, except that I doubt very much whether it could have been done by any one but the man who did it; for the methods used in some cases seemed to be far more likely to lead to discontent, if not insubordination, than to happiness, smartness, and content.

I will relate one case, which I think will astonish some of my brother officers who have gone through the mill of some years' experience as executive officer.

The squadron was cruising off the coast of Portugal, as usual, wallowing about under sail, scarcely under command, but in open order, as it was too dangerous to let those unwieldy five-masted ships get too near to one another without steam at command. It was much the same sort of night as that upon which the *Captain* capsized, though blowing harder; and it became necessary to clew up and furl the mainsail. The sail was duly clewed up and the mainyard men sent aloft to furl it, but after spending rather more than an hour on the yard they came down again without having furled it, their excuse being that the sail was wet. Next morning the captain ordered the mainyard men to be mustered

on the quarter-deck and asked them once more why they came down from aloft without furling the mainsail; but all they could say was that they were unable to furl a wet sail. "All right," says the captain, "furling wet sails is entirely a matter of practice, and I'll teach you how to furl a wet sail."

The mainyard men were then dismissed, and nothing more was heard upon the subject until about a fortnight afterwards. When the squadron was lying at anchor off Lisbon, one Thursday afternoon the captain sent for me and said, "Muster the mainyard men, and we'll teach them how to furl a wet sail."

Now I must explain, for the information of my non-naval readers, that Thursday afternoon is "Jack's" half-holiday. It is popularly known as "make-and-mend-clothes day," and was no doubt originally set apart to give the sailors a chance of mending their clothes by daylight, before there was anything better than a tallow-dip candle to work by after dark. No drills or exercises take place, and no work of any sort that can possibly be avoided; in fact, it is sacrosanct as a half-holiday for making and mending clothes, which means that nine men out of ten roll up a blue frock for a pillow and lie down on the deck for a "caulk," as they call it; and nothing is more likely to cause discontent and grumbling than to disturb them unnecessarily on Thursday afternoon.

When, therefore, I received the order to muster the mainyard men on a Thursday afternoon in harbour, I began to feel some doubt as to whether

my gallant captain was not going a little too far; for I guessed pretty well that he was going to exercise them at furling the mainsail, though I did not foresee how the "wet" sail was to be provided. I had not long to wait, however; for the matter was taken out of my hands, and I could only look on and wonder, with some trepidation as to what would happen.

And this was what happened: First the main-yard men were ordered to get up the fire-engine and rig the hose; then to go aloft and loose the mainsail; then to pump on it for half an hour, until it was thoroughly wet; then to go aloft and furl it; which they did in the highest good-humour, laughing and chuckling, as if it was the best of jokes and the greatest lark they had ever had in their lives!

Now I am absolutely unable to explain the psychology (I believe that is the proper word) of this affair. All I know is that if I had done it myself I should have produced something very closely approaching to a mutiny; whereas the attractive personality, the obvious sincerity, and the frank good-humour of my cheery captain produced exactly the opposite result.

How true it is that one man may steal a horse whilst another may not look over the gate. Or, as Locke puts it, "In most cases the manner of doing is of more consequence than the thing done; and on that depends the satisfaction or disgust wherewith it is received."

One of the innovations in naval routine which we made in the *Agincourt*, was the substitu-

tion of the bugle for the *vox humana* in all drills and exercises, including sail and spar drill. It was found to be difficult, in these long five-masted ships, for even the most powerful human voice to make itself heard on the forecastle or in the fore-top from the quarter-deck or bridge, from whence the executive officer or the officer of the watch had to "carry on." So we taught the men a few of the more distinctive light-infantry bugle-calls, which were to mean certain well-known executive orders. Thus in tacking ship, for instance, instead of the commander or the officer of the watch bellowing out, "Fore tack head bowlines, of all haul" (which would have only sounded on the forecastle like boo-hoo-hoo-hoo), the bugler at his elbow played a short tune, and round went the head yards.

The men took to it very kindly, and it proved to be a great success; for instead of half a dozen officers shouting out and repeating orders, there was perfect silence aloft and also on deck, with the exception of a short, clear call on the bugle, which could be heard all over the ship, and all went like clockwork.

One day the signal was made to us to get up steam with all dispatch; but before the fires could be lighted the funnels had to be got up; for in those days they were telescopic and always kept down except when wanted for use. They were very heavy, and had to be hove up with hand-winches by the stokers, which took a long time—longer, the captain thought, than necessary; so he decided that the stokers should have some funnel drill, so that the funnels should be

got up or down more smartly and more in accordance with the general practice of the ship. But the difficulty was that we had already exhausted all the well-known bugle-calls, and there was nothing left for "Up funnels." It looked like checkmate on the music; but my gallant captain was a bad man to beat, at any game, so he sent for the bugler, who was a smart and intelligent lad, and they had a private interview and rehearsal, the upshot of which was that the bugler had been taught to play the well-known air of "Polly, put the kettle on and let's make tea." The stokers were mustered on the quarter-deck and told that when they heard this tune they were to get the funnels up as quickly as possible, that the time would be noted, and that they would be exercised at this manœuvre until they performed it smartly enough to please the captain.

Most officers, especially popular ones, have nicknames amongst the men, and Captain Hopkins—and all of us—knew that his nickname was "Polly Hopkins," so that there was a sort of double meaning in "Polly, put the kettle on" as a tune for "Up funnels."

The next act in this melodrama of "discipline by consent" occurred once more on a Thursday afternoon ("make-and-mend-clothes day"), when all hands were asleep or smoking; and the bugler suddenly appeared in the stoker's quarters and played "Polly, put the kettle on." Up jumped the stokers, rushed to the funnel-winches, and up went the funnels in less than half the time they had ever gone up before, amidst hearty

laughter from all hands. After this it was not necessary to have any more gratuitous exercises at "up funnels."

Now I am well aware that some of our hard and stern disciplinarians, excellent officers in their way, will be inclined to sneer at this kind of thing, and perhaps call it trivial, childish, not in accordance with the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, etc., etc.; but when all is said against it, which it may or may not deserve, no one will deny that a light-hearted, cheerful and willing ship's company will do better work, and probably better fighting too, than a discontented and grumbling one. Nelson's "band of brothers" made a good show when it came to fighting.

A keen and generous sense of humour has smoothed and settled many a difficulty which has checkmated the pedantic stickler for strict naval discipline; but woe betide the man who lacks it and tries to imitate! I have seen it tried more than once, and he always makes a fool of himself. Perhaps he has never read the warning of that shrewd old philosopher George Herbert—

> "Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking
> Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer.
> Hast thou the knack? Pamper it not with liking,
> But if thou want it, buy it not too dear.
> Many, affecting wit beyond their power,
> Have got to be a dear fool for an hour."

When the *Agincourt* had been about four months in commission she was ordered "up the Straits," so that our own admiral (Campbell)

might sit as president of a court-martial on the captain and officers of the *Lord Clyde*, which ship had drifted ashore on the Island of Pantillaria, whilst saving coal, as usual. The *Lord Clyde* had remained on shore for several days, and was considerably damaged before she got off again, so of course a court-martial was ordered, Admiral Campbell was appointed president of it, and off we went to Malta.

The *Agincourt* was the first of the three long five-masted ships, and probably the biggest ship, that had ever entered Malta harbour, so she made rather a sensation, and we heard afterwards that the harbour-master had a fit of nerves and got no sleep for a week before we arrived.

These three ships were probably the most unhandy ships that were ever built for the navy. They were only 10,000 tons—mere jollyboats compared with our so-called cruisers of to-day; but they only had a single screw, and there was no balanced rudder, cut away deadwood, round up of the forefoot, or any of the other devices with which our naval architects have succeeded in making our modern monsters as handy as they are said to be. Nevertheless, we got into Malta Grand Harbour without running on shore or smashing anything, and tied up head and stern.

We found the Mediterranean Fleet lying in the harbour, and it was on this occasion that we beat them at all their drills and exercises, as mentioned in a letter which I have already quoted, which I received some years afterwards from my old captain. It was, as he said, a

great triumph to beat the home team in their own waters at their own special exercises, and we were very proud of ourselves, as we well might be.

The spirit of the old sail and spar drill departed with the sails, and it is scarcely possible for officers and men who have served only in modern ships to understand the intense keenness of the rivalry between ship and ship which these exercises called forth and developed. They were, no doubt, dangerous exercises, and there were many accidents and some loss of life, when men fell from aloft or ropes carried away and spars came tumbling down upon the crowded deck, so that the marines found themselves in the firing-line as well as the bluejackets; but the risks and the dangers were the very things which supplied an image of war, and demanded courage, agility, ready resource, confidence in comrades, discipline, obedience, and a thorough organization of all the parts of the machine. Thus competitive exercises with the spars and sails were the best possible peace preparation for the stern reality of war, for which the navy must always be as ready as it is possible to make it.

No doubt it is possible to carry out competitive exercises of various sorts in modern ships, so as to keep up a healthy spirit of rivalry—competitive prize-firing, competitive coaling, laying out anchors, etc., all of which are attended with some risk; but these exercises are not so patent, not so much in sight, not so romantic—if I may use the word without being misunderstood—as the old mast and sail drill. Still, it is no use

crying over spilt milk. The sails are gone, and with them a good deal of the romance of a life on the ocean wave. They ought to have gone twenty years before they did; and our seamen must accommodate themselves to modern conditions. There are plenty of risks to harden the nerves in submarines and in destroyers manœuvring at high speed in rough weather. There will be plenty more when we have a squadron of a hundred naval aeroplanes exercising in the clouds: so I must crave forgiveness, and plead constancy to my first love, for indulging in the above obituary tribute to the glory of the sails.

After the *Lord Clyde* court-martial we returned to the Channel and rejoined the "Lisbon Squadron" at Lisbon; a stupid place in summer, as there was no snipe-shooting. "Para Grandé" was still flourishing, and the Portuguese marquis was fleecing the officers gaily with his infernal roulette-table. I used to go there myself occasionally and drop a dollar or two; but it was really in a spirit of altruistic self-sacrifice that I did so, as I found it kept the midshipmen away. I warned them all that I might drop in there at any time, and that if I found any of the midshipmen of the *Agincourt* at the gaming-tables, their leave would be stopped for a month; and as my captain also undertook to report to me any midshipman that he found there, they could never feel safe that one or other of us might not drop in upon them at any time; and I believe it kept them away to a very great extent, though no doubt they dodged us occasionally, for the resourceful British midshipman is up to a good many tricks, and difficult

to get to windward of. His one great failing is that he seems entirely to forget that his captain and commander were once midshipmen themselves, and are therefore not quite ignorant of the strategy and tactics of the gunroom.

Before we had been a full year in commission, Admiral Campbell was appointed to take command of the flying squadron, and, to our great grief, he took with him our beloved captain.

Our new admiral was another Scotsman—Macdonald—belonging to another clan, and we were given to understand by his friends that he was hereditary chief of Clanranald and Lord of the Isles. The isles, however, had all been sold, and our new chief did not wear a kilt, even on grand occasions; nor did he bring with him any bagpipes, for which we were thankful; but he certainly had an ear for music, as the following incident will show.

It was the custom for the band to play a selection of music when the admiral had a dinner party; and out of compliment to Admiral Campbell they used frequently to play "The Campbells are Coming," as that was believed to be his particular clan tune. But the first time the chief of the Macdonalds heard it he was very angry and sent for me—the captain being on shore—and the following dialogue took place:—

"What do they mean by playing 'The Campbells are Coming'?"

"It has been customary to play it, sir, as a compliment to Admiral Campbell, and being a Scotch air, no doubt the bandmaster thought it would be agreeable to you."

"Agreeable to me! Don't you know the next line of the song? 'The Campbells are coming, the Macdonalds are running.' Never let me hear that tune again."

"Certainly, sir. Your orders shall be obeyed. Is there any other tune that you would like the band to play?

"Yes; let them learn to play 'The Garb of Old Gaul.'"

So the bandmaster was ordered to get the music of "The Garb of Old Gaul," and teach it to the band.

The Scotch have ever been a fine fighting race, even without their kilts and the martial music of their bagpipes.

I propose to skim very lightly over the thin ice of my second year in the *Agincourt*, as the memory of it is most disagreeable to me—quite the most unpleasant period of my whole service afloat; and it certainly does not make it any better when I reflect, and feel bound to acknowledge, that a great deal of the unpleasantness was my own fault, and due to my temper and lack of self-control under somewhat irritating circumstances. The fact of the matter was, that I did not "hit it off" with my new captain, and we were at loggerheads the whole time.

I was of course prepared (more or less) to find that a new captain, joining in the middle of a commission, would find that matters were not exactly as they ought to be; and that certain details would require "putting to rights" according to his ideas of what they ought to be: but I

by every admiral in command of every squadron in every part of the world since that date. The usual conditions are—Any sails, any rig, any shaped false keel, but no sinking ballast; that is to say, the boat must float when full of water; and there is generally a handicap for size.

I had been in bed for some days before the race with an attack of influenza; but my wise and amiable doctor decided that it would do me less harm to get up and sail the race, than to lie in bed fretting. So up I got, padded myself like a mummy, with oilskins over all, sailed the *Agincourt's* cutter in a strong breeze, and won the first "Admiral's cup"; which adorned my dinner-table for twenty-seven years, and I then sent it back to the Channel Squadron, to be sailed for annually as a challenge trophy, and to be called the "Hornby Cup," in memory of the smartest, strictest, and yet most popular officer of modern times; known in the Service by the affectionate sobriquet of "Uncle Jeff."

Shortly after this I was appointed to the *Asia*, and left the *Agincourt* without a sigh.

As my story is about memories of the sea, I do not propose to dwell at any length upon my three years' service in the *Asia*, a venerable old hulk, moored amongst the mud flats, about half way up to Fareham. The duties were not onerous. In fact, it was a case of rest and be thankful, after five consecutive years of hard work in the Channel Squadron. It was really the first "spell off" I had ever had during nineteen years' service, and I was grateful for it at the time; though, as I have before

remarked, it was a false step from a professional point of view, as this was not a "promotion billet."

I generally managed to hunt two days a week, or perhaps three a fortnight, during the winter, with the Hambledon or one of the other Hampshire packs; and in the summer I had a small yacht and sailed about in the Solent, so as not to get absolutely land-rusty; but to a large extent my three years in the *Asia* were all beer and skittles. The most onerous of my duties was sitting on courts-martial. These were rather frequent; they generally came on hunting mornings, and as I was invariably summoned to sit upon them I really did something for my pay.

When I had been about two years in the *Asia*, my captain (Lord Gilford) was appointed Junior Sea Lord of the Admiralty, and of course had to move up to London and take his seat in his office; but I do not think he was ever happy there. His proper place was the quarter-deck, handling a ship or directing a squadron, and the sedentary work of an office was unsuited to his temperament. Neither he nor Admiral Hornby—who also had a spell at the Admiralty—were ever at home within its gloomy portals. Both of them were sailors, men of action and not sea lawyers. Their characters were too independent and perhaps too peremptory to sit at a Board and argue, and then act as merely one of a committee. They were bothered and irritated by all the formalities and the red tape, and one can easily imagine either of them finding himself in the position of the Irish

juryman, who, upon realizing that he was in a minority of one, warmly declared that never before, in the whole course of his life, had he met eleven more obstinate men.

Shortly after Lord Gilford had taken his seat at the Admiralty, an old friend and shipmate went to pay him a visit, and found him rather in the dumps. He was sitting at his desk, with a huge pile of papers in front of him, his chin sunk upon his waistcoat, nursing his wounded wrist, silent and morose, and evidently pondering over some question of more than ordinary importance, the solution of which he had not been able to reach.

"That pile of papers you see there," said he, "is the result of three months' heated controversy as to whether the boys in the training ships are to be supplied with pewter spoons, or whether they are to dip up this new ration of treacle with their bread, and without the use of spoons; and we have not settled it yet."

The *Asia* had been Sir Edward Codrington's flagship at the battle of Navarino in 1827, and I had the honour of entertaining for one night his distinguished son, the late General Sir William Codrington, who commanded the British Army in the Crimea after the death of Lord Raglan.

After my three years in the *Asia* I went on shore on half-pay, and had a bad hunting accident in the south of Ireland, got concussion of the spine, and was on the flat of my back for nearly a year. And as I have now reached the limit of my space, and I expect also the

limit of the reader's endurance, I think this will be a good place to stop, although I am only about half-way through my life at sea. But if the public like my yarns, they can have more of them at some future date, if I am spared.

I took up my pen to write some memories of the sea, and find that I have drifted into an autobiography of an undistinguished naval career. But such as it is, it must now be launched upon the stormy seas of criticism, to face the battle and the breeze and the deadly shafts of our literary critics, should any of them think it worth powder and shot. But there is one thing they cannot do: even if they shiver my timbers, riddle my water-line and dismount all my guns—they cannot deprive me of the deep satisfaction, the joy and the gratitude I feel in having been permitted to spend all the best years of my life in the finest Service in the world—a life on the ocean wave.

> "And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
> Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
> Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
> I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
> Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
> Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
> For I was, as it were, a child of thee,
> And trusted to thy billows far and near,
> And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

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